

DON'T WRITE ME OFF:  
A STORY OF HOPE FOR THE YOUTH OF PUERTO LIMÓN

By

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## Abstract

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This project is directed to the youth of Puerto Limón and includes a dual reflective and reflexive memoir. The project was named “LCG Project Hope/Projecto Esperanza.” An awareness campaign was developed to highlight positive resources available to young people in Central Limón. The creation and display of posters empowering the youths to continue to say yes to the positive resources and no, to alcohol and other drugs was achieved. There is also a three minute video in which the candidate briefly shares his story about addiction, studies done on the use of drugs by young people in Limón, and highlights the posters. The writer organized events in which he looked back at his life and reflected on his twenty years of powerlessness over alcohol and cocaine. He shared his spiritual journey to sanity and self-awareness. Further, he defined addiction and outlined the two main behaviors that addiction is made of. He also shared his experience, strength and hope in recovery, and his personal development as a social worker/pastoral care counselor and his passion to do ministry work both in developing countries and locally.

The demonstration project is an incorporation of my inspirational speaking to address the youths of Puerto Limón, Costa. The purpose is to empower the youths to say yes to positives resources available to them in Puerto Limón, and no to alcohol and other drugs. This empowerment comes through conferences, workshops, spiritual retreats, posters and videos.

## Acknowledgments

First of all, I am grateful to my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ for guiding me to complete this Doctoral Project.

I wish to express my sincere thanks to my site team, selected team members, my editor, Thomas Fuller, and Dr. Nancy Fields, my advisor

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Thanks to my staff and immediate supervisor at my place of employment who supported me during this endeavor, and made sure those daily operations ran smoothly when I was away working on the project.

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## INTRODUCTION

In my travels over the past seven years to Puerto Limón, Costa Rica while engaging in mission work, I was exposed to communities with few resources. The church members I did mission outreach with informed me that the young people in these communities are known to smoke marijuana daily and drink alcohol. They also stated that there is a continued need for additional resources to help minimize the intake of alcohol and other drugs. They pointed out some adolescents that had attended Sunday school, but left the church and are now smoking and drinking. Churches in central Limón struggle with creating and sustaining social programs for the young people. This information was disturbing to me, so I began to have conversations with young people while visiting churches to do ministry work providing food, clothing, school supplies, and spreading the gospel.

Over the years, while I continued to travel for mission work in Puerto Limón, I became better acquainted with the communities and the people of central Limón. I became comfortable in the communities I visited to do ministry outreach. As a result, I began to engage in meaningful conversations with residents about drug use among youths. The youth I conversed with enlightened me about some of the factors that lead them to smoking and drinking alcohol — both marijuana and alcohol are widely accepted in Limón's culture. In addition there was the lack of youth programs for them to engage in which they believe would decrease delinquency and help them stay off the street.

I knew of previous drug awareness campaigns in Costa Rica. During one of my several conversations, I inquired about the effectiveness of these previous drug awareness campaigns. A majority of them mentioned that they were not aware of any previous campaign. I realized that the campaigns I remembered were done before these teenagers were born. The older ones, those who remembered, maintained those campaigns about “saying no to drugs” were not effective. As a missionary and social worker, I wanted to investigate the information I gathered through my chats with the youths about drug use and lack of resources in central Limón.

After one of my mission trips in early 2015, I enrolled in the Doctor of Ministry program. To my amazement, I found out that part of this program was to implement a project which would benefit a community. Immediately, I decided that my project would be done in Puerto Limón and address drug use and positive resources for the youths in Limón. After reading an article in *La Nación* a few months after I enrolled in the program, I was sure this was the time to implement such a project.

According to the May 20, 2016 edition of *La Nación*, a leading Costa Rican newspaper, there is cause for concern because of the significant increase in use of alcohol and marijuana among high school students in Costa Rica over the past two years. This increase includes Puerto Limón.<sup>1</sup> The article further declared a need for an innovative campaign to address the increase in the use of both substances. As a result of the information from *La Nación*, in conjunction with team members of this project, I decided that the focus of this project would be to highlight positive resources which are available

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<sup>1</sup> *La Nación*, May 20, 2016.

to young people in Limón such as sports, dance groups, education, youth groups, and libraries among other resources.

According to a study done by the National Children's Hospital with adolescent students in metropolitan areas of Costa Rica, marijuana use has increased from 1% in 1991 to 10% in 2006 and to 15% in 2014. This study is consistent with studies which were done by the Instituto de Alcoholism y Farmacodependencia (IAFA).<sup>2</sup>

IAFA is the leading research institution within Costa Rica's Department of Health whose primary function is research into the prevention, treatment and rehabilitation of alcohol, tobacco and other illicit drug use in Costa Rica. While rates of alcohol and drug use increased nationwide, research done by the Instituto de Alcoholismo y Farmacodependencia (IAFA) showed Limón has the lowest percentage of youth consuming alcohol and other drugs in Costa Rica. It also points out that youth in Limón start drinking alcohol at later ages than youth in other parts of the country.<sup>3</sup>

This location was chosen for my demonstration project because I want to give back and be of service to the town in which I born and lived until the age of thirteen, when I migrated to the United State. I am still tied to the church where I grew and worshipped and to the ministry outreach program. I also still have family and friends there. Puerto Limón, commonly known as Limón, is a province located on the Atlantic/Caribbean side of the country.

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<sup>2</sup> L. Arias, "Health Officials Alarmed by Increase in Marijuana Use among Young Ticos," *The Tico Times News*, July 10, 2014, <http://www.ticotimes.net/2014/07/10/health-officials-alarmed-by-increase-in-marijuana-use-among-young-ticos> (accessed November 25, 2016).

<sup>3</sup> William Chacón Serrano, "Distribución Geográfica de los Niveles de Prevalencia del Consumo de Drogas en Población de Educación Secundaria," <https://www.iafa.go.cr/investigacion/nuestras-investigaciones/50-conocimientos/investigacion/344-distribucion-geografica-de-los-niveles-de-prevalencia-del-consumo-de-drogas-en-poblacion-de-educacion-secundaria.html> (accessed January 4, 2017).



Networking is an integral component of this venture which shows in the qualitative data gathered. While networking with directors of youth programs, church leaders, school principals and other community organizers, it became apparent that there were positive resources for youth to engage in in this region of the country, which have the potential to divert them from consuming alcohol and other drugs. The problem is that youth and their parents are not aware of the resources available to them. Agencies that provide these services are not coordinated with the other services. They all echoed the need for unification and coordination of services for youth.

From conversations with youths and community leaders, it became apparent that they were not aware of the outcomes of the research done by IAFA. This project used this information to inject hope in the youth of this region. The outcome of the research done by IAFA is also not widely known by the Limón community. This information is examined in this project.

The dissertation title is “Don’t Write Me Off, a Message of Hope for the Youth of Puerto Limón” and the project’s name is “LCG Project Hope/Proyecto Esperanza.” The abbreviation LCG stands for Lloyd Cole Goulbourne. I am the president and founder of Ruth’s Ministry, a nonprofit organization based in Brooklyn, New York. The ministry’s mission is to spread the gospel and provide goods and services to needy individuals and families, both locally and internationally. The ministry has done mission work in Costa Rica, Panama, the Dominican Republic and the United States; however, most of our mission work has taken place in Puerto Limón.

A fundamental role of Ruth’s Mission is the coordination of social services with churches and community-based organizations in in Puerto Limón. This has led to many

conversations with young people who have become victims of drug addiction and prostitution. These conversations reinforce the negative stigma that has been placed on the youth who live on the Caribbean side of the country, which is known as Limón — one of Costa Rica's seven provinces. It's assumed by natives and tourists alike that most youth from Limón consume alcohol and smoke marijuana and that there are not sufficient positive resources available to them. A close look was taken of available resources for youth and how they can access these services, and also to disseminate the result of the IAFA research.

Site team and team members have repeatedly shared stories about young friends and family members who have turned to alcohol and marijuana to deal with the hopelessness of the young people in Limón that they have witnessed. They also expressed the need for additional positive resources to address the recent increase in the use of alcohol and marijuana among Limón's youth.

Team members who assisted with the implementation of the project are members of a Youth Committee. The site members and team members reside in the central region of Limón where this project takes place. The site team is made of a librarian, computer engineer, social work/family counselor, physician/professional basketball guide/videographer and a musician. All have been participants in grassroots organizations in Limón and other regions of the country. The team members who helped with the implementation of the project are young natives between the ages of 18-30 who are members of a committee on youth improvement. The implementation process took place at different locations such as libraries, churches and governmental offices — the use of which was donated.

Historically, alcohol and marijuana are seen as acceptable drugs in the Limón culture; but there is concern that if this issue is not addressed the potential for first-time drug use will potentially increase and could lead to the use of other drugs such as cocaine and heroin. The teams expressed the need to generate an awareness campaign which will be different from the historic campaigns which just say “Say no to drugs.”

The mission of this project was to address the increase in use of alcohol and marijuana among youth in Limón; however, after meeting with the site team, youth groups and researching available resources and information obtained by IAFA, we decided as a team that to successfully engage the youth and their parents, it would be better to focus on the positive resources. The major challenge in just addressing drug addiction in the chosen site is that alcohol and marijuana which is widely consumed by young people not only in Limón but throughout the country. The excessive consumption of both substances is not considered a problem. Discussion about addiction is taboo. Families, churches and community organizations do not discuss these issues and treat it as if it did not exist. The few drug treatment programs are mostly in the capital, San Jose, and are not affordable for youth of Limón.

The mission of this project then shifted to embrace an empowerment movement for the youth of Puerto Limón to continue to say yes to the available resources for youth in Limón, and no to alcohol and other drugs. The hope was that they would take advantage of the resources in this region to better their condition and become leaders who will help with the development of the region.

This project created a public awareness campaign for the youth of Puerto Limón. The campaign highlighted positive resources available to the youth in the province of

Limón. The success of this project is measured by the use of the awareness campaign by youth, parents and community leaders to educate and increase awareness of available resources to counter the increase in drug use.

Posters were created describing the mission of the project and featured some of the positive resources. The posters featured pictures of locals who are considered role models in the town. These posters were placed strategically throughout the city. There is a video which includes my testimony and highlights resources. The video is provided for distribution to schools, youth groups and social services agency to be used at public events; I have broadened awareness by going on different shows on the local radio station; and there are conferences at schools, churches and other organizations that serve youth. In addition there is coordination of services with schools, churches, community-based organizations, local government and sports. Social media is used by young people all over the world, including Puerto Limón. LCG Project Hope has created a Facebook page where the target audience can go for information regarding resources and events that are taking place in the city. The posters and video can also be uploaded on this page. Friend requests are sent out. Addressing the problem to youth is especially important as studies show that a young person who has managed to avoid drug use by age 15 is more likely to avoid it in later years.

As a blessed, recovering addict, I am a living testimony that recovery from drugs and alcohol is possible for anyone regardless of their race, creed, sexuality, religion or lack of religion. I am also a motivational/inspirational speaker who shares his experience, strength and hope about his trajectory with drugs with youth, parents, schools, churches and other organizations in the community. This story instills hope in individuals who are

still caught up in the grip of addiction and think there is no way out, and also for those who are contemplating picking up a drug for the first time. Through my speaking I address the theological prospective of drug use, the psychology of drug use, and the social and cultural analysis of drug use.

Chapter Two of the dissertation is a dual reflective and reflexive memoir. I look back on my life and reflect on my twenty years of powerlessness over alcohol and cocaine. I share my spiritual journey to sanity and self-awareness. I define addiction (as well as sanity) and outline the two main behaviors that make up addiction. I also share my twenty plus years of addiction and the struggles I encountered trying to stop consuming alcohol and cocaine. It is also important to share my experience, strength and hope in recovery, and my personal development as a social worker, pastoral care counselor and my passion to do ministry work both in developing countries and locally. Excerpts from this chapter are used for conferences and workshops for youths.

Action research is the guiding force for this project. In my understanding of action research, to be effective the processes of inquiry must always be participatory and seek to establish a sense of community among participants. A community-based (in the sense of establishing a “common unity” of purpose and perspective) understanding of each other’s experience and perspective, establishes the basis for truly effective outcomes, with head, heart, and hand.<sup>4</sup>

This demonstration project will become a contribution to a campaign which was created by the current mayor for the central region of Limón, Nestor Mattis Williams. The slogan for this crusade is “El cambio de imagen de como nos ven y como querenos

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<sup>4</sup> Ernest T. Stringer, *Action Research* (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE, 2014), xxi.

que nos vean” (a change in the image of how we are seen and how we want to be seen).

One of the objectives of Mr. Mattis’ campaign is to create awareness of the increase of drug use among youth and to highlight positives resources for youth in Limón.

## CHAPTER 1

### THE SETTING: COSTA RICA AND DRUG USE

My name is Lloyd Cole Goulbourne and I was born in Puerto Limón, Costa Rica. I grew up in the Episcopal Church, but now I worship at the Brooklyn Tabernacle church which is non-denominational. I am a social worker/administrator who currently works at a non-profit organization in Brownsville, Brooklyn as a Program Director for a funded program which provides services to individuals who are HIV positive.

I am the president and founder of Ruth's Ministry which is also a no-profit organization which is based in Brooklyn, New York. The ministry's mission is to spread the gospel and provide goods and services to needy individuals/families locally and internationally. We have done mission work in Costa Rica, Panama, Dominican Republic and the USA. The ministry has partnered with churches in these countries to carry out its mission. I am also an inspirational speaker and recently launched the "Don't Write Me Off" series. During my speaking, I share my life story and speak about God's grace and mercy.

For this demonstration project, I did not work at a specific church/congregation. My demonstration project turned out to be a combination of my mission which spreads the Gospel and provides goods and services to needy individuals/families locally and internationally, and inspirational speaking which consist of me sharing my testimony. All business for Ruth's Ministry and LCG Inspirational Speaking takes place at my residence in Brooklyn, New York

My project was conducted in different settings and communities in Puerto Limón, Costa Rica. Costa Rica is in Central America and has a population 4.857 million. The capital is San Jose. Spanish is the official language, but English is also spoken around Limón and among members of the middle class. Descendants of the Jamaican blacks speak an English dialect. Roman Catholicism, the predominant religion, is the official religion of the state; however, the constitution guarantees religious freedom and this right is generally respected in practice. About 69% of the population is nominally Roman Catholic; only about 40% of Roman Catholics are active members. About 18% of the population belongs to other Christian churches. Of these churches, the primary Protestant denominations include Methodist, Baptist, Evangelical, Episcopalian, Mormon, Jehovah's Witnesses, and Seventh-Day Adventists.<sup>5</sup>

Costa Rica is made up of seven provinces, and Puerto Limón is one of them.



The population is fairly homogeneous, primarily of European (mainly Spanish) descent. Whites and mestizos (mixed white and Amerindian) account for 94% of the total

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<sup>5</sup> Central Intelligence Agency, "Costa Rica," *The World Fact Book*, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/cs.html>.



population. The remainder consist blacks (3%), Chinese (1%), and Amerindians (1%). The blacks for the most part are of Jamaican origin or descent, and some mulattoes live mainly in the Limón port area. Most of the Amerindians reside on isolated reservations.<sup>6</sup>

This demonstration project was specifically done in Puerto Limón, Costa Rica, commonly known as Limón. This province is located on the Atlantic/ Caribbean side of the country. A large Afro-Caribbean population migrated to Limón to help build the railroad and brought the customs and traditions with them which are still practiced today by most Limónenses. People of African ancestry, who comprise an even smaller percentage of the total population, live mostly in the Caribbean lowland of Limón province. The descendants of workers brought from the West Indies (mainly from Jamaica) in the 19th century to build the Atlantic Railroad and work on banana plantations, they were the targets of racism, and for many years residence laws restricted them to the Caribbean coast.

The province of Puerto Limón is made up of six counties of which Limón center is the capital. The project is focused on Limón center. Limón is the sixth-largest city in Costa Rica, with a population of over 58,000 (including surrounding towns), and is home to a multicultural community.

The main site for this demonstration was the Saint Mark's Episcopal/Anglican church in Limón. Alternative sites such as Thomas Major Lynch Public Library and a few cultural centers in the surrounding towns were used.

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid.



I chose this church to conduct most of the conferences and workshops because of the relationship/history that I have with this church. My spiritual formation started at this church prior to me migrating to the United States. The church has a strong presence in the Limón community and provides needed services to the marginal individuals and families. The church has a program which feeds the homeless and provides spiritual guidance twice a month. It also provides clothing, school supplies and workshops for the surrounding towns. Over the past ten years, Ruth's mission has partnered with the Saint Marks church in feeding the homeless. The services are provided in English and Spanish.

It is governed by a vestry. The vestry is the legal representative of the parish with regard to all matters pertaining to its corporate property. The number of vestry members and the term of office vary from parish to parish. According to their by-laws, vestry members are usually elected at the annual parish meeting. The presiding officers of the vestry are the rector and two wardens. The senior warden usually leads the parish

The site team and team members live in Puerto Limón. I have worked with them on several projects prior to the doctoral project. On one of my mission trips in 2015, I informed them about this project and they were willing to be members of the site team. The site team is made up of Marva Dixon, a retired social worker and community organizer; Kendall Cayasso, a journalist/videographer; Herman Morales, a computer engineer; David Carnegie, a Medical Doctor; and Margaret Simpson, librarian.

Research as it pertains to drug use in Costa Rica and specifically in the province of Puerto Limón, is very limited. According to *La Nación* a leading Costa Rican newspaper there has been a 10% increase in the use of alcohol and marijuana among high school students over the past two years. They related that although there are some resources to address substance abuse throughout the province of Limón, they are insufficient and not consistently available to the community.

A study done by the Adolescents' Clinic at the National Children Hospital in Costa Rica conducted a study among school students in the metropolitan areas of Costa Rica, and it indicates that the number of marijuana users increased from 1 percent in 1991 to 10 percent in 2006, and to 15 percent in 2014. According to the Costa Rican Social Security System, this data is consistent with studies released in 2014 by the Instituto de Alcoholismo y Farmacodependencia (IAFA). The study also found a slight drop in consumption of other substances including alcohol, tobacco and illicit drugs, with alcohol remaining as the favorite substance for abuse among high school students.

The IAFA is a branch of Costa Rica's Department of Health. It is responsible for providing technical assistance in educating Costa Ricans on prevention, treatment, and rehabilitation for addiction to alcohol, tobacco and other licit or illicit drugs. This branch

is also in charge of approval for all public and private programs that provide all the above services in accordance with the law. Addressing the problem with youths is especially important as studies show that a young person who has managed to avoid drug use by age 15 is more likely to avoid it in later years.

During the last decades there has been an increase in the social problems of the province of Limón. While not neglecting prostitution, drug trafficking, family disintegration or sexual abuse in young people, drug addiction, like alcoholism, has become one of the biggest problems found in society. Due to the fact that alcohol and marijuana smoking is acceptable culturally in Puerto Limón, adequate attention has not been given to this social problem.

Costa Rica's strategic location, porous borders, limited security forces, and thinly-patrolled waters make it a major transit and temporary storage country for illicit drugs. From 2013 to 2014, annual cocaine seizures increased from 20.46 metric tons (MT) to 25.04 MT. During the first nine months of 2015, seizures totaled 14.59 MT. Bulk cash seizures from drug proceeds totaled approximately \$5.2 million over this same nine month period. A sharp rise in the homicide rate has focused the Costa Rican people and government on the increased presence of illegal drugs, greater domestic consumption, and associated turf wars.<sup>7</sup>

According to the Alcoholism and Drug Addiction Institute (Instituto sobre Alcoholismo y Farmacodependencia - IAFA) consumption of cocaine increased fourfold between 2006 and 2010, surpassing the Central American average. Marijuana usage increased 260 percent during the same period, reported IAFA; however research done by IAFA which focused on alcohol consumption and other drugs by provinces in Costa Rica, indicates that the province with less consumption of alcohol which is the gateway to other

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<sup>7</sup> United States, *International Narcotics Control Strategy Report*, vol. 1, *Drug and Chemical Control* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Dept. of State, Bureau for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, 2016), 137, <https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/253655.pdf> (accessed February 4, 2018).

drugs, is Puerto Limón. Youths in Limón also start drinking at a later age than youths in other provinces. The prevalence of alcohol consumption in the province of Puerto Limón is lower than the other six provinces. The differences apply both to men as well as women. The comparison with each of the remaining provinces indicates that the levels of consumption also are lower in Limón.<sup>8</sup> Studies of marijuana use and other illicit drugs show the consumption of marijuana is greater than the use of cocaine and “crack,” which is also true on the national level. Further, the use marijuana starts at an earlier age compared to the other two substances, (16.89 vs. 20.23 and 19.50 for cocaine and “crack”).<sup>9</sup>

In general, active alcohol consumption decreased from 21% in 2009 to 20 percent in 2013, and 53% of surveyed students reported drinking an alcoholic beverage at least once during their life. In addition, six percent acknowledged consumption of other drugs, including pills, synthetic drugs and hallucinogenic mushrooms. Of that number, 11% admitted they had experimented with heroin.<sup>10</sup>

Cannabis is illegal in Costa Rica, but there is a high tolerance of smoking marijuana throughout the country, a decriminalization system is implemented de facto since police officers do not detain people carrying enough for only personal consumption, yet no amount has been defined as a minimum for possession.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Instituto sobre Alcoholismo y Farmacodependencia, Área Desarrollo Institucional. Proceso Investigación, *Distribución geográfica del consumo de drogas en Costa Rica 2006* (San José, CR. : IAFA, 2010), <https://www.iafa.go.cr/images/descargables/conocimiento/distribucion-geogra-consumo-drogas-cr-2006.pdf> (accessed February 4, 2018).

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Gail Winger, James H Woods, Chad M Galuska, and Tammy Wade-Galuska, “Behavioral Perspectives on the Neuroscience of Drug Addiction,” *Journal of the Experimental Analysis of Behavior* 84, no. 3 (November 2005): 667-681.

<sup>11</sup> Inside Costa Rica, “Marijuana Consumption up in Costa Rica,” <http://www.insidecostarica.com/dailynews/2012/june/26/costarica120062601.htm> (accessed February 4, 2018).

In Costa Rica individuals with substance abuse narratives can get help from the Centers of Attention Integral in Drugs and the Institute on Alcoholism Drug (CAIDIAFA) at city hospitals and private drug treatment centers which are very expensive. The goal is to provide preventative education young people which will reduce the possibilities of them picking up their first drug.

I have had many conversations with community leaders, pastors, social workers, and doctors during my mission trips to Limón, and they all are concerned about the increase of alcohol and marijuana use among teenagers in Puerto Limón. They related that there are some resources to address substance abuse throughout the province, but there are not enough and not available consistently in the Limón community. They all echoed the need for more workshops in the schools, churches, and community centers.

I spoke with a total of fifteen community leaders and workers, and they said that there a need for a project which will focus on the positives resources which are available to the youth of Limón, and which would propel them away from alcohol and other drugs. It was echoed among them that Puerto Limón has been stereotyped with a negative image. It's time to reverse this image. The five social workers who joined the conversation stated that some resources are available, but there is no coordination of services among them. Programs for youth are working in isolation.

Due to limited information about resources for youths in Limón, this project will use site team and team members' expertise and knowledge of the community to gather information about available resources.

## **Drug Use in the United States**

Due to the fact that I do work around substance use in the United States which I share with the people of Costa Rica, I thought it would be beneficial to include information about drug use in USA. According to Michael's House, which is a drug treatment program, drug addiction has reached epidemic levels across the globe. There are 230 million drug users worldwide. In America, the problem is no better, with 19.9 million people using illicit drugs in 2007. Statistics further show that despite the fact that the American people make up only four percent of the global population, they still manage to use two-thirds of illegal drugs worldwide.

Among the drugs that are considered illegal are marijuana, synthetic marijuana, cocaine, heroin and hallucinogens/stimulants (LSD). Alcohol, nicotine and prescription drugs are considered legal, but can become highly addictive. The 2013 National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH), an annual survey sponsored by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) reported the following:

- In 2013, an estimated 24.6 million Americans aged 12 or older were current (past month) illicit drug users, meaning they had used an illicit drug during the month prior to the survey interview. This estimate represents 9.4 percent of the population aged 12 or older. Illicit drugs include marijuana/hashish, cocaine (including crack), heroin, hallucinogens, inhalants, or prescription-type psychotherapeutics (pain relievers, tranquilizers, stimulants, and sedatives) used non-medically.
- The rate of current illicit drug use among persons aged 12 or older in 2013 (9.4 percent) was similar to the rates in 2010 (8.9 percent) and 2012 (9.2 percent), but

it was higher than the rates from 2002 to 2009 and in 2011 (ranging from 7.9 to 8.7 percent).

- Marijuana was the most commonly used illicit drug in 2013. There were 19.8 million past month users in 2013 (7.5 percent of those aged 12 or older), which was similar to the number and rate in 2012 (18.9 million or 7.3 percent). The 2013 rate was higher than the rates in 2002 to 2011 (ranging from 5.8 to 7.0 percent). Marijuana was used by 80.6 percent of current illicit drug users in 2013.
- Daily or almost daily use of marijuana (used on 20 or more days in the past month) increased from 5.1 million persons in 2005 to 2007 to 8.1 million persons in 2013.
- In 2013, there were 1.5 million current cocaine users aged 12 or older, or 0.6 percent of the population. These estimates were similar to the numbers and rates in 2009 to 2012 (ranging from 1.4 million to 1.7 million or from 0.5 to 0.7 percent), but they were lower than those in 2002 to 2007 (ranging from 2.0 million to 2.4 million or from 0.8 to 1.0 percent).
- The number of past-year heroin users in 2013 (681,000) was similar to the numbers in 2009 to 2012 (ranging from 582,000 to 669,000) and was higher than the numbers in 2002 to 2005, 2007, and 2008 (ranging from 314,000 to 455,000).
- An estimated 1.3 million persons aged 12 or older in 2013 (0.5 percent) used hallucinogens in the past month. The number of users in 2013 was similar to that in 2012 (1.1 million), but it was higher than in 2011 (1.0 million).



- The percentage of persons aged 12 or older who used prescription-type psychotherapeutic drugs non-medically in the past month in 2013 (2.5 percent) was similar to the prior percentages.<sup>12</sup>

The above findings suggest that drug abuse in America continues to increase significantly. It is said that the increase in drug use comes with a huge price tag for the government in terms of emergency room visits for overdose, crime prevention, incarceration, education and drug treatment. The price tag can be up to \$600 billion.

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<sup>12</sup> Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, “Results from the 2013 National Survey on Drug Use and Health: Summary of National Findings,” (Rockville, MD: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 2014): 1, <http://www.samhsa.gov/data/sites/default/files/NSDUHresultsPDFWHTML2013/Web/NSDUHresults2013.pdf> (accessed January 23, 2016).

## CHAPTER 2 TESTIMONY

Chapter Two is a dual reflective and reflexive memoir. The writer will look back at his life and reflect on his twenty plus years of powerlessness over alcohol and cocaine. He will then share his spiritual journey to sanity and self-awareness. The proceeding chapters will look at the theological, psychological, and social/cultural perspective of addiction.

### **Review of the Literature**

Many people who use drugs have a problem identifying themselves as addicts. Very simply, an addict is a man or woman whose life is controlled by drugs.<sup>13</sup> Am I an addict? This is a question only you can answer, and it might not be an easy thing to do.<sup>14</sup> The drugs handled us. We lived to use and used to live. One of the most dangerous effects of drug abuse is denial.<sup>15</sup> Addiction has long been understood to mean uncontrollable habit of using alcohol or other drugs. It takes courage and strength to face up to addiction. But there's hope, no matter how bad the addiction and no matter how powerless you feel.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Narcotics Anonymous World Services, *NA Basic Text* (Van Nuys, CA: NAWS, 2008), 3.

<sup>14</sup> Narcotics Anonymous World Services, "Am I an Addict?" NA Informational Pamphlet # 7 (Van Nuys, CA: NAWS, 1988).

<sup>15</sup> HelpGuide.Org, "Drug Abuse and Addiction Signs, Symptoms, and Help for Drug Problems and Substance Abuse," <http://www.helpguide.org/articles/addiction/drug-abuse-and-addiction.htm> (accessed January 23, 2016).

<sup>16</sup> HelpGuide.Org, "Getting help for drug abuse and drug addiction," <http://www.helpguide.org/articles/addiction/drug-abuse-and-addiction.htm#getting> (accessed January 23, 2016).

It is said that addiction is a disease that is made up of obsession and compulsion. What makes us addicts is the disease of addiction – not the drugs, not our behavior, but our disease. There is something within us that makes us unable to control our use of drugs. This something also makes us prone to obsession and compulsion in other areas of our lives.<sup>17</sup> Drug addiction, also is a disease that is characterized by a destructive pattern of drug abuse that leads to significant problems.<sup>18</sup> The substance used is continued despite knowledge of having a persistent or recurrent physical or psychological problem.<sup>19</sup>

Recovery is a process, and there are bound to be some bumps in the road. But you can overcome your addiction by learning how to cope in ways that are constructive rather than destructive to yourself or others.<sup>20</sup> Recovery is an active change of attitudes and old behaviors and it is suggested that one stay away from people who you used drugs with and places one went to get them.<sup>21</sup> Narcotics Anonymous helped many people to recover from alcohol and drugs. Narcotics Anonymous is a fellowship of men and women who help each other stay clean (drug free).<sup>22</sup> The brighter part is the fact that, of those who are

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<sup>17</sup> Narcotics Anonymous World Services, *The Narcotics Anonymous Step Working Guide* (Van Nuys, CA: NAWWS, 2005), 2.

<sup>18</sup> Help Guide.Org, “Drug Abuse and Addiction,” <http://www.helpguide.org/articles/addiction/drug-abuse-and-addiction.htm> (accessed January 23, 2016).

<sup>19</sup> American Psychiatric Association, *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders DSM-IV-TR* (Arlington, VA: American Psychiatric Association, 2010), 111.

<sup>20</sup> Help Guide.Org, “Drug Abuse and Addiction.”

<sup>21</sup> Narcotics Anonymous World Services, *NA Basic Text*, 10.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*

now our members, many have long terms of complete abstinence and are better able to help newcomers.<sup>23</sup>

Addiction continues to be one of society's most complex and prevalent problems. Millions of American abuse alcohol, drugs, and nicotine every year. No culture is exempt from substance abuse. It is an equal opportunity disease that crosses all cultures.<sup>24</sup>

According to an article "Psychological Causes of Addiction," published by the American Mental Health Counselors Association, "since addiction is a harmful, maladaptive behavior, psychological models are very useful for understanding why people engage in this unhealthy behavior."<sup>25</sup>

Self-destructive, self-indulgent behavior like drug abuse and binge drinking is sin. There is no way around it (1 Corinthians 6:9). It is a perversion of God's plan, and we cannot make excuses for it. We can't blame an addict's environment, upbringing, or genetic predisposition. Those things may contribute, but sin is a matter of choice.<sup>26</sup>

*Narcotics Anonymous* is based on spiritual principles. A portion of the book is to invite members to engage in a journey of recovery and to serve as a resource in gaining a personal understanding of the spiritual principles in the *Twelve Steps of Narcotics*

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<sup>23</sup> Narcotics Anonymous World Services, "Recovery and Relapse," NA Informational Pamphlet #6 (Van Nuys, CA: NAWS, 1986).

<sup>24</sup> Minority Nurse Staff, "African Americans, Substance Abuse and Spirituality," *Minority Nurse*, <http://minoritynurse.com/african-americans-substance-abuse-and-spirituality> (accessed January 26, 2016).

<sup>25</sup> Tom Horvath, Kaushik Misra, Amy K. Epner, and Galen Morgan Cooper, "Psychological Causes of Addiction," *American Mental Health Counselors Association*, <http://www.amhc.org/1408-addictions/article/48345-psychological-causes-of-addiction> (accessed January 26, 2016).

<sup>26</sup> Ray Deck III, "A Christian Response to Drug Addiction," *FaithlifeBlog*, March 12, 2014 <https://blog.faithlife.com/blog/2014/03/a-christian-response-to-drug-addiction/> (accessed January 23, 2016).

*Anonymous*.<sup>27</sup> Their attitude, based on the spiritual values of our steps and traditions, is the dynamic force that is bringing increased numbers and unity to our program.<sup>28</sup> We believe that the steps are presented in a manner that encompasses the diversity of our fellowship and is reflective of spiritual awakening.<sup>29</sup>

What is the status of religion and spirituality in the world today? This is a difficult question to answer. Both are extraordinarily rich parts of our human experience and social life, and as such, are resistant to easy interpretation. The complexity of the topic and weaknesses in available statistics are complicated by the fact that different measures of religion may be appropriate for different cultures.<sup>30</sup>

The Bowen Theory is a new way of thinking about human interaction. It is a lens that clarifies the emotional side of families, organizations, and even society itself. It has given thousands of individuals and families a blueprint for improving their relationships, stabilizing their families, and reaching their long-term goals.<sup>31</sup>

### **Testimony**

If you are reading this testimony and you have written off a love one, friend, co-worker, or yourself, I invite to continue to read about my life trajectory, and re-think about giving the individuals you have giving up on and most importantly, yourself another chance at life. Because of my life experiences, I had written myself off; thank

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<sup>27</sup> Narcotics Anonymous World Services, *It Works: How and Why the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Narcotics Anonymous* (Van Nuys, CA: NAWS, 2001).

<sup>28</sup> Narcotics Anonymous World Services, "Recovery and Relapse."

<sup>29</sup> Narcotics Anonymous World Services, *It Works: How and Why*.

<sup>30</sup> James M. Nelson, *Psychology, Religion and Spirituality* (New York: Springer, 2009), 12.

<sup>31</sup> Roberta M. Gilbert, *The Eight Concepts of Bowen Theory* (Falls Church, VA: Leading Systems Press, 2006), 3.

God family members and friends did not write me. I was my hardest critic way before I picked up my first drug.

During my testimony you will hear the mention of God, please don't let this deter you from reading on, God is the name of my higher power. This testimony is intended for individuals who believe in God, don't believe, or have doubt that there is a God.

As I reflected on my life's expedition over the past fifteen years, the Holy Spirit echoed to me the story of Saul of Tarsus which is found in the book of Acts in the New Testament. Saul was a Pharisee (Jew) whose intention was to wipe out the Christian Church. He was a persecutor of Christians. He went as far as to ask the high priest to grant him permission to arrest anyone who was following Jesus in the city of Damascus (little did he know what awaited him on the road to Damascus). One would say that someone like Saul would not be given a second chance in life due to the crimes he committed. This story stories tells me that there hope for everyone no matter their trajectory.

I am writing as a fifty-seven-year-old man within whom lives a young boy who from a baby was afraid of intimacy. My dear mother with much love related to me the fact that she was not able to get me to cling to her breast for her to breast feed me when I was baby, a little boy who was not able to speak up for himself. My maternal grandfather told me that as child when I was hungry, I would not cry out. What I did was go into a corner and sleep. There continues to be a little boy who was sexually abused by an individual close to the family, a little boy who struggled with his sexuality and low self-esteem. This little boy was also afraid of clowns, the sound police and fire struck sirens — he would hide under the bed to avoid these sounds. At fifty-seven, I also realized that I

was bullied at school. I was told that I acted like a girl and that I was fat. Because of all of the above, I had pretty much written myself off. But again, thank God, I had family remembers and friends who supported me.

I was born and raised in Puerto Limón, Costa Rica by my maternal grandparents from age three to thirteen. At age thirteen, I migrated to the United States with three other siblings. My mother, who I will write about later in the chapter, migrated to the United States, to New York when I was three years old. She had a total of eight children but the first one died at birth. I grew up with six siblings by three different fathers. My father, who I will also write about in the latter part of this chapter, is the father of the last three children my mother had. I am the last child for my mother and father. I guess that makes me the baby of the family.

In spite of the above issues, I must say, I am grateful for my upbringing. Looking back at it, I must say that my maternal grandparents did a great job with what they knew and had in instilling values in me and my other siblings. Edith, my grandmother, taught both males and females residing in the home how to clean a house, cook, bake, do laundry and iron clothes. Charles, my grandfather, also knew how to cook. Both of them taught us how to say grace before eating, pray in the morning and before going to bed. I was taught to address my elders as Mrs. or Mister. I was never to rest my hands on the table while eating and needed to excuse myself before leaving the dinner table.

My grandparents did not isolate the paternal side of the family or the fathers of my other four brothers and sisters. They articulated stories about our paternal grandparents who died before I was born, and introduced all of us to my uncles and aunts from my father's side of the family. I remember being told that my paternal grandfather

was a man of few words and did not drink alcohol. My paternal grandmother on the other hand had a bad temper and used profanity.

My grandparents made sure that our basic needs were met. We had shelter, food, clean clothes. They introduced me to a vital need which is God. This was done through Bible stories and sending me to Sunday school.

My paternal and maternal grandfathers were not alcoholics; however, all other males on my mother's and father's side were alcoholics. Two sisters who had different mothers also turned out to be functional alcoholics. My three maternal brothers smoked marijuana. The drug abuse cycle continued with me for over twenty years.

I was close to my maternal grandmother and two sisters by the same father and mother. I went to the market, doctor's appointments, community affairs and church with my grandmother. I also assisted with house chores. I felt secure with her and felt the need to take care of her like she did me. My sisters allowed me to play with them, bake cakes and play games such as hopscotch. I also felt safe with them, but wished for a similar relationship with my brothers. All my brothers played a sport but never took time to teach me how to play. I was afraid to engage in sports such as basketball, baseball or soccer because I was told that I threw like a girl. My eldest brother went to jail frequently, never worked or went to school. I received no attention from any of my brothers, so I fused with my grandmother and sisters.

## **Migration**

My caring maternal grandmother made her transition on Thursday September 14, 1972. After her death, by my mother's instruction, I went to live with my only maternal aunt. My aunt also took good care of me. I have no regrets about that decision. Aunt's husband, who we called "Uncle Les," was an Anglican priest and he assisted in getting



the paper work done for our migration to the United States. Both my aunt and her husband treated me like one of their own biological children. They live above the church, so I was at very service.

On January 4, 1974, I and three other siblings migrated to the United States to join my mother and two other siblings in Brooklyn, New York. We all were looking forward to this day with great anticipation of a new world which had many opportunities. My father and his partner along with my grandfather and my aunt and her husband accompanied us to the airport to bid us goodbye. This was my first time wearing a suit which my father bought for me. In New York, my mother and my other two siblings received us. This was my first flying on a large airplane, but I was not afraid. I was anxious to get to my new home and to be with my mother.

I remember the airplane descending into New York City to land at John F. Kennedy International Airport. The sight was mesmerizing with all the lights which light up the city. There was a blizzard the day before our arrival; thus, the city was covered with snow. From above everything looked white. This was my first time seeing snow and I was about to experience my first winter.

After getting through with immigration, we were united with my mother and siblings. They brought winter coats for us and greeted us with much love. I was so ecstatic that I did not feel the coldness until a few days later. When I arrived to my new place of residence, and got out the taxi I was amazed at the way the cold air produced a smoke like when I spoke. The next day, think I spent most of the day gazing out at my new environment through the window. I continually thank God for this new experience and my mother for keeping her promise to send for her children.

My other two siblings who came to New York two years before did an excellent job in helping assimilate me and my two sisters and brother who migrated at the same time. My mother introduced us to her friends and educated us about the New York culture. She helped us in navigating public transportation and introduced us to the food culture. Ruth my mother, Claudette my sister and Rolando my brother educated us about the holidays that are celebrated in USA and how they are celebrated. My brother Rolando was the one who mostly took us shopping for the latest fashion in clothes. I did not experience any homesickness, was just happy to be in the USA with my family; however, culture shock set in when I started school.

At the age of thirteen, I was placed in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade. I spoke English, so was able to communicate well in my new environment. My mother contemplated sending me to private school because she thought public school would be too rough for me to handle. I really appreciated her concern for me because I was afraid of the change after hearing of ways in which students acted in school in public school. The educational system was different at that time.

After sharing her intention of sending me to private school, friends and family told her to save her money and send me to public school because private schools were also rough. She decided to send me to public school and she went ahead and enrolled me in a junior high school close to home. Also, one of her friend's daughters attended that school. Her friend's daughter took me to school the first and explained to me how the school system worked. She also showed how to travel back and forth to school. After a month or so I adjusted to the New York City school system. I graduate from junior high

and high school. After high school, I went on to college. My two sisters who migrated with me did the same thing. They were my role models for pursuing higher education.

### **Addiction**

Before the age of eighteen I had a beer or two, but never imagined that I would become an addict who becomes powerless over alcohol and other drugs. I don't think my family and friends contemplated this lifestyle for me either. At about the age of eighteen, I was introduced to hard liquor (Cacique Guaro) by my father who I considered to be a functional alcoholic. I will address this term in section dedicated to my father. Cacique Guaro is Costa Rica's cheapest and most popular rum. It is similar to vodka.

I recall vividly sitting with him in a bar on one of my vacations to my hometown Puerto Limón, Costa Rica and him stating to me "how he could not comprehend the fact that I lived in New York City and did not drink alcohol." I am the only son for my father, and please be reminded that my maternal and paternal uncles and some cousins were alcoholics.

The drink of the day was Cost Rican vodka chased with Imperial beer. Imperial is the number one beer of the Costa Rican. I fell in love with the feeling the alcohol produced after taking my first drink. Subsequently, I drank every day after that until I returned to New York two weeks later. I did not have a father/son relationship with my father and I never lived with him. He provided for my basic needs; however, we never spent quality time together. I always dreamed of a father who would teach me to play sports, ride a bicycle and teach what it is to be a responsible male. That did not happen; but I realized that he did the best with what he had or was taught. Today I am grateful for all he did for me.

Upon my return to New York, I became a social drinker. I found myself only drinking at social events; however, one drink was never enough. During this period I considered myself a responsible drinker. I continued to attend high school and graduated in 1978. After high school I went on to college and obtained a part time job at a hospital in Harlem, New York. During my first semester in college, my advisor told me that I would do well in a profession which helped people and also told me that I had a warm spirit which attracted people to me. I did not digest that at the time. At college I was always on the party scene, but did not drink on campus. I attended City College of New York from 1978-1984. I dropped out of college in my senior year just six credits shy of a bachelor's degree because of the progression of my addiction.

I worked at a hospital in Harlem, New York from 1978-1987 in the dietary department. I rapidly discovered that many staff working at this institution were active drug users. I attended Christmas parties and other events hosted by the hospital, but only drank alcohol until six years later I began to experiment with other drugs with my co-workers. During these six years I also became educated about heroin since there was a detox unit on the fifth floor of the hospital.

In 1984 after I moved out of my mother's home, I began to experiment with marijuana, but did not care for it, because it made me giggle too much and I did not know how to roll it up. I wanted to fit in; thus, I went to bars with my co-workers after work and sometimes got so drunk, I ended up sleeping in the hospital's locker room or at a co-worker's home who lived close to the hospital. I worked the 6:00am -2:00pm shift.

My addiction continued to progress and in less than a year, I began drinking and smoking marijuana during my lunch break; especially on the weekends where there was

minimal supervision. At some point in 1984, I was introduced to cocaine and again I fell in love with another drug, alcohol being the first one. Like alcohol, cocaine took me outside of myself and I became the extroverted person I always wanted to be, or so I thought. After some time of using, I became more of an introvert.

My cocaine use started out slow. A \$10 bag would last me a week, but as time went on I need more and more trying to get the first high I got. I never got that first high again and this when use progressed from once a week to daily use along with alcohol. At work I was taking longer lunch breaks and was not able to carry out my job responsibilities and began to abuse my sick time and sometimes not showing up for work and not calling. I remember attending a Christmas party and sniffed so much cocaine, I became immobile and my co-worker got scared because they thought I was having a heart attack. My personal life also began to spiral out of control. I was not paying bills and sometimes did not have food in the house. Co-workers and supervisors became concerned, but I denied my drug use and told them I was just living and enjoying my life. They saw the progression way before I did or was willing to admit. I sensed that they were disappointed in me because of the respect they had for as a young black who was working and pursuing a higher education. My family was not cognizant of the progression of my drug use because I had started to isolate from them. My cocaine use progressed to smoking crack.

I was introduced to freebasing (crack) in 1985 about a year after moving out to live on my own. I moved into studio apartment not far from my mother. I like the finer things in life; thus, I furnished my apartment with antique furniture, wallpapered the kitchen with pricey wall paper and tiled the kitchen floor. My bed was draped in satin

sheets and the shower curtain was also satin. The drapes were custom made by Sears. The bar in my living space was stocked with name brand liquor and crystal glasses. Money, property and prestige is what I lived for at this time. As a result, I only invited friends over to show off the material things I had acquired. I had acquaintances that were drug dealers and would give large amount of cocaine at a discount price. I used this as an incentive for friends who use cocaine to come over. At this point I was still a fashionista. Most of my clothing was name brand and I did some traveling during my vacation.

One night a friend of mine who I got high with came over to have drinks and sniff cocaine. In the middle of the get-together, he asked me if I ever tried cooking up the cocaine and smoking it. My reply was no, and I was reluctant to try it because I had heard of the horrors of smoking crack. This was at the height of the crack epidemic. Still on a quest to fit in, I agreed to try it. He went to show me how to cook up cocaine with baking soda, which once heat is applied it converted to crack. He had all the necessary paraphernalia to smoke the crack hidden in his backpack. He cooked it up and proceeded to give me instruction on how to put the rock in the glass pipe and applied the lit torch to it. Once the heat hit the pipe the bowl filled with smoke and I was to inhale, keep in for a while, then exhale. I followed his instruction carefully and I took that first hit of crack, I heard bells and paranoia sat in. The paranoia only lasted a few minutes and I wanted more.

From that night on, my life spiraled downhill. I became obsessed with crack. I would stay up all night smoking and not show up for work for days at a time. I made many trips late at night to buy more crack. I became familiar with most the drug spot in my neighborhood. I will tiptoe out of my apartment not wanting my neighbors to hear going

out so frequently late at night. I used until all my money was done, and many time did not have money to go to work. When all the drug and money was gone, remorse sat in, and I prayed to God that I will stop using. However, the next day I repeat the same behavior.

I stopped taking care of my apartment and hung sheets over the windows to keep the apartment dark at all times. I began to sell the paintings I had purchased for my apartment for a small fraction of what I paid for them. I began to borrow money from loan sharks on the job and would hide from them on pay day because my check at the time was only for three days and if I paid them, I would not have enough money left to purchase drugs. My world began to crumble. I prayed to my God night and day to stop using, but was unable to stop.

This writer remembered receiving a retroactive pay check for about \$900. In 1985, \$900 was a lot of money. What followed was me abandoning my job for a whole week. I not only did not show, but I did not call in either. During this week I smoked crack and drank alcohol every day, all day with friends but most of the time by myself.

Since this was a union job, my employer had conduct diligent search before terminating me. They could not get in touch with me by phone because by then my phone was disconnected due to non-payment. Now my life had become unmanageable. I owed over three months' rent and had no food in the house. In their last attempted to get in touch my place of employment sent me a telegram. This communication stated if I did not report back to work in a specified period, I would be fired. I went to work after receiving the telegram and because the money had run out, I admitted to my employer that I had a problem with drugs and alcohol, and I needed help. I had not paid rent for

over three months and was evading the landlord. I had no food in the cupboards or the refrigerator. I don't really remember how I fed myself during this time.

By God's grace I was able to put myself together and go down to the job in an attempt to save it. Humility kicked for a moment and confessed to my employer that I had a drug problem. Deep down, I did not feel like I had completely surrendered to my drug addiction. I was just doing this to save my job and work on using drugs successfully. My employer gave me a referral to the union which was located on 42<sup>nd</sup> street. Feeling ashamed and like a failure, I went to the union office and met with a union representative who assessed my case and recommended a twenty-eight days drug rehabilitation program upstate New York. I can't recall the name of the program, but I was willing to go, not knowing what would happen to my apartment and the remainder of my belongings. I did not go back to my apartment; I asked to be picked up at my mother's house.

Two days later a cold winter morning in January 1986, I was picked up from my mother's house and taken to a drug rehabilitation program in upstate New York. During this period, my family and close friends remained supportive. My mother prayed for me before I left. At this point, I felt ashamed, guilty, unworthy, and hopeless and felt I had failed my family and friends; however, I did not totally lose faith in my higher power (GOD).

I was confused about the whole process of a drug program and did not know what to expect. On the second day one of the counselors took me to this office and told me that he did not think this drug program would be beneficial for me. He had assessed that I was struggling with my sexuality and would not open up in this drug program. Because of his assessment, I was sent to a drug program in Minnesota which catered to the individuals



who were struggling with their sexuality. During our conversation, I disclosed being sexually abused as a child and being ashamed of my sexual preference. For me this was a breakthrough, realizing the pain it has caused me. I will write more about my abuse further on in this chapter. I called my mother and informed her of change that was going to take place.

The next morning, I flew out to Minnesota. I was greeted at the airport by a representative from the program. Minnesota was extremely cold and lots of snow. This was culture shock for me; I was the only black resident in the program and this state appeared to be mainly white people. Twenty-eight days of my life were spent in this program. For the duration of these days, I did not hear much. My thought was on getting high and I was not ready to work on myself and deal with the underlying issues such as sexuality, sexual abuse, and financial debt. I was in debt with the Internal Revenue. My counselor was concerned that if I did not deal with those issues, I would continue to use drugs. Basically, I faked it through the program. I only addressed the issues on the surface and was reluctant to follow up with an aftercare plan which included therapy and making self-help meetings.

When I got home, I did not have a place to live because I had lost my apartment for non-payment and the marshals had seized all my possession. My mother, God bless her, allowed me to stay with her. I made a few Alcoholic Anonymous and Narcotic Anonymous meetings, went back to work, but continued to be out for days at a time because I started to get high again. I began to steal money from my mother.

My addiction progressed; I used to live and lived to use drugs. My life became unmanageable. I was not able to show up at family functions, for work, or for myself. I

left college missing only two classes to obtain my BS. I used for years and thought that I would die using drugs. I just could not see any light at the end of the tunnel and just did not want to feel any pain.

My family and close friends did not write me off; I think they just surrendered me to God and continued to pray for me. Maya Angelou said that “love liberates” and that is what my family did. I prayed many times, asking God to remove my obsession and compulsion to use drugs, but that was only after I ran out of drugs. I was not willing to totally surrender my life over to my higher power. I just could not live without drugs; and I was unwilling to face the little boy within who was consumed with pain and was yelling, “LET ME OUT”.

My progression had led to daily use of crack and alcohol. I felt like I had burned all bridges in New York, so I decided to make geographical move back to my native country. I resigned from my job and reached out to an aunt in Costa Rica to inquire if I could stay with her until I got on my feet. God bless her heart, she agreed, and I am eternally grateful for her taking me in. I had no money and no plan for a new life in Costa Rica. Financially, I did not have money; my family had to buy the airline ticket for me and gave me some cash to travel with.

### **Geographical Move**

In 1987, I moved back to my native country Costa Rica to escape the drug, so I thought. My father lived in Puerto Limón and I thought he would reach out to me when I returned; he did and supported me in his own way.

San Jose the capital of Costa Rica became my new hometown. I quickly realized that wherever I go I take “LLOYD” and I had worked on my underlying issues which

contributed to my addiction. I forgot that my addiction to alcohol started in Costa Rica, and the fact that alcohol is widely accepted in CR and cocaine was stronger and cheaper.

Within a month of my return, I found out who the drug dealers were in the community where I lived and became a regular consumer in the local bars. I moved from my aunt's and went to live with friends. I was blessed with a good teaching job at a private school teaching English as a second language.

The vicious cycle of addiction took off again. I was not showing to work, and on many occasions showed up with terrible hangover and smelling of alcohol. On pay days I traveled from the capital to the Atlantic side of the country to buy cocaine. This was approximately a three-hour trip I made during the day and made it back in the evening to teach class. I started to dismiss class early, so I could to the bar to drink and sniff coke. It got to the point where I was partying with my students and ended up using cocaine and borrowing money from one of my students. Liquid lunches became a remedy for hangovers; a period of activity during my working day. I learned quickly that the remedy did not work.

On pay days, I would go bar hopping and spend all my paycheck. I will return home the next day broke and unable to contribute to the household. The bars closed at about 2AM and reopened at 6AM and I would roam the city until the bars reopened. I sat in the corner of the bars and would cry asking myself, how did I get to this point?

I was in so much pain and did not like myself; but taking my life was never an option. Deep inside I still had hope that my God would see me through this misery; he was just taking too long. My job evaluations were great, and my students respected me. I began to recognize my love for working with people and that I was blessed with excellent

interpersonal skills. I had the ability/skills and interacted well with people from all walks of life. I am an active listener and empathetic person. On the other hand, I was not seeking ways to stop using drugs and thought I could stop at any time without outside intervention. Still caught up in my addiction, I returned to New York in 1989.

### **Return to New York**

I returned to New York in 1989, with the intentions to stop using alcohol/drugs. Within a week, I was at the bar where I hung out in the past and the same drug dealers were in there selling drugs. There were welcome back free drinks and cocaine. At this time I had substituted crack for straight up cocaine. My daily use continued and I established credit with the bar maid and drug dealers. Stealing money from my mother also resumed. It was just me and her in the house; she became a victim.

In spite of my drug use, I was blessed with good jobs, but was not able to keep them for long periods of time. I abused my time and ran out of excuses; thus, I walked off the job or got terminated. Supervisors and program directors would say, "You are such a good worker, but you are never on the job." Each time I got a new job, the first thing I would do is read the employee handbook to see what the agency's drug policy was.

I obtained my first job in Social Services in 1991. I worked with the HIV/AIDS and substance abuse population. I thought this was ironic because many of my friends had died from AIDS and I was still using drugs. I needed help just as the clients I was servicing. My tenure at this job was short lived due to budget cuts; but all others were due to absenteeism. Supervisors had a hard time terminating me because I was a good worker when I showed up to work. Staff and clients would tell me that there was something spiritual about me and I would give them spiritual suggestions. I am not sure if they knew I was actively using drugs. On several occasions, I accompanied clients to

detox at six o'clock in the morning while I was under the influence of drugs and alcohol. I conducted home visits under the influence and testified in court stating that a parent was not fit to get custody of their child due to their drug use.

Getting high far away from home produced much anxiety for me, so throughout my addiction, I got high at one bar one block from my home and friends' home who live close to me. No matter how high I got, I had to make it home. I was always afraid of being stopped by the police and getting arrested for possession of drugs. Only by God's grace I have never been to prison, ate out of garbage or been homeless. All of these are yet for me and thought they could become reality if I continued to use drugs.

On my occasion I sat on the stoop late at night crying and wondering how I had gotten to that point. People would stop and ask me if I was ok. After I had cried my eyes out, I would go up to my room and put the television on and I remember "Feed the Children" ministry infomercials were always on, especially on Sunday mornings. I always said to myself that I would like to do mission work.

In December 2002, my eldest sister invited me to Unity of New York. This a spiritual place in which she thought I would fit in despite my struggles; a place where I would be free to be who I am. There was meditation which I was comfortable with and I encountered some free-spirited people. As an end of the year tradition, there was a burning ceremony. I was instructed to write a "Thank You Letter to God" thanking him for future blessings. I did what I was instructed to do. I gave them a copy of the letter which they will mail back to me the following year, and I could see if God granted me those blessings. The second step was to throw a copy of the letters in bucket of fire which

was located outside of the temple. The first thing I thanked God for in this letter was to help me stop using drugs.

I was ashamed to seek help because I had referred and accompanied many of my assigned clients to drug programs in the community I lived and worked. I tried many ways to stop, but was not successful. However, I was still holding on to my God, but prayed, only after the money and the drugs ran out. Like Saul who was knocked down by an angel on his way to Damascus to arrest Christians, and his life was never the same, God sent an angel on Mother's Day, May 9, 2003 with a message for me. This angel was my caring, loving and praying mother.

### **Angel on Mother's Day**

On Mother's Day May 9, 2003, I had \$50 to buy a gift for my mother. However, my preoccupation was with buying drugs. As a result, I spent the \$50 on drugs and did not get my mother a gift. My sisters, as usual, had taken my mother out for dinner. On her return from dinner, my mother rang the bell for me to come down stairs to help her bring up the gifts my sisters gave her. I was too high on cocaine and paranoia had set in making it impossible for me to go down the stairs and help her up with the gifts. I tried to sober up by taking a cold shower, but that did not work, so I pretended I did not hear the bell. She took her time and climbed the stairs with her gifts. As she opened the door, I pretended to be asleep, but she knew I was high/intoxicated. When she entered the apartment, she stood at my room door and she uttered "Thank God for the girls" and she walked away.

Shame and guilt consumed me as the tears streamed down my face. Her words led to the lifting of my obsession and compulsion to drink alcohol and sniff cocaine. I sobered up immediately and I totally surrendered to drugs and put my life in my God's

hands. Since that day. The next day I called friends and family and told them I had lost the battle to alcohol and cocaine. I humbled myself and self-referred myself to an outpatient program which I had accompanied many of my clients to. I called on a Monday and was given an appointment for Wednesday. During these three days, I did not leave the house or take phone calls from friends. My mother appeared to have a sense of my surrendering, because when friends called she would tell them that I was not available.

As I sat home for three days, I reflected on the following biblical stories: Jesus's resurrection on the third day, Saul being blinded for three days and Jonah in the whale's belly for three days. So, I associated third day's events with new beginnings. I have not had the desire to use drugs since May 9, 2003. That's over fourteen years.

During my intake, my assigned counselor stated to me that it appeared that I was ready to turn my life around and stop writing myself off. He realized my relationship with my mother was very important, so he asked me what I would do if my mother died. I told him and would not use. My mother passed away on January 6, 2015, and I did not use.

### **Mother**

Ruth Maude Goulbourne Richards my mother was a very important person in my life. She loved all her children unconditionally. She had an infectious smile and never complained about anything. During my active addiction, I knew she was praying for me overtime. She was a praying woman who went on her knees daily. She migrated to the USA when I was three years old and kept her promise of sending for her children to join her in the Big Apple (New York). Only my eldest brother was not able to come because he was at an age that my mother could not sponsor him.

I attribute my spiritual growth to my mother modeling what is faith. On the application for seminary I was asked to write about significant persons and events that have impacted, or continue to impact my spiritual growth and development. This is what I wrote: “My faith journey began at age three when my mother left Costa Rica and migrated to United State. She pledged to my maternal grandparents that she will send monthly financial assistance and in the future, will sponsor her children so they could join her in New York City. At that age, I believed in her promise and prayed to God for it to become reality. Both promises were fulfilled. Like all humans, my faith wavers at times; however, I continue to hold on to my mother’s promises.

My mother left when I was three years old, so I really did not know her and did not know about the scriptures; but as I grew older I became aware of God’s promises and was able to associate them with my mother’s. As my beliefs in God and his promises grew and I had never seen him, I believed in my mother’s promises although I did not hear it from her personally and did not know her at age three. Just like Jesus’ ascension into heaven to sit on the right hand of his father to intercede for us, my mother migrated to the USA to plead our case to the United State Embassy for permanent residency in the United states and to provide for her children’s basic needs.

James 2:14 tells us that faith without work is dead. Believing is not enough, we must pray and put footwork in, leave the result to God, and bear in mind to pray according to God’s will and trust in his timing. My mother was a faithful woman and unconsciously her children were also faithful. Now that I have matured as a spiritual being, I fathom that as a child I believed my mother was going to keep her promises. I for one prayed and patiently waited on God for the time for us to emigrate to the USA. Yours



truly was obedient to maternal grandparents, went to school, attended church and applied more time in reading books in English to be better prepared for schooling in the United States.

On the other hand, my mother put in the footwork on her part by, by working several jobs sending financial assistance on a monthly basis, applying for our residency, assigning an uncle to take care of paperwork at the American Embassy in Costa Rica. Her commitment extended to her not going to parties, so she could send monetary assistance. She sent English books for my grandfather to read to us in order for us to have a better command of the English language.

Roman's 10:17 states, "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." My faith increased by reading the Bible and studying its content to the best of my ability, and also by praying. My mother's actions increased my faith and hope. This woman took time to write each of her children individual letters, send birthday and Christmas cards, and phone calls date with us. We did not have a phone; thus, we had to go to the church rectory to receive her call. Ruth consistently stated her plan for her children. The same if we read the word of God consistently, we will be able to meditate on it when our faith wavers.

During my active addiction, my mother suffered in silence. She was not a woman to complain, her remedy was prayer, she prayed daily, and read her Bible. During this time, she was diagnosed with breast cancer twice within a five year span, and yet she remained optimistic and beat cancer twice. I was not able to support her fully because I was deep in my addiction.

Thanks, my God for the opportunity for sharing honestly with my mother and her continuing to love me unconditionally. I recall telling her about being sexually abused and my struggle with my sexuality. She held my hands and said no matter what, I must hold my head up high and continue to trust God. She made attempts to blame herself for the abuse taking place because she was not there with me. That thought was short-lived, because I told her it's was not her fault, and thanked her for the sacrifices she had made for all her children. On an episode of "Oprah: Master Class," Whoopi Goldberg said "leave nothing unsaid." My plan was to leave nothing unsaid to my mother and other love ones. I want freedom from resentments or any harm I had caused anyone.

One of most hurtful and shameful aspect of my active addiction was stealing from my mother. That was the first person I wanted to make amends to once I stopped using drugs. My mother loved coffee, so I invited her to Starbucks on a Saturday afternoon with the intent to make amends to her for stealing her money. She was excited because she had never heard of Starbucks. This was in 2003 when Starbucks was just popping up. When we got there, we talked about many things before I said to her, "Mom, I am sorry for stealing your money." My mother had a hearty laugh, so she burst out in laughter and said, "I knew all long it was you, because you and I were the only one in the house." She went on to say, "I am just glad that you have turned your life around, keep doing what you are doing." I felt like a ton of cement fell off my shoulders. This was the first of many outings I went on with my mother.

On Super Soul Sundays on the OWN channel, Ms. Winfrey usually asks her guest a series of questions before ending the interview. One of the questions that caught my attention was, "What do you know for sure?" One thing I am 100% sure of is that my

mother loved me. She loved all her children, and all were special to her in different ways.

Dr. Maya Angelou, American poet and author said the following,

I am grateful to have been loved and to be loved now and to be able to love, because that liberates. Love liberates. It doesn't just hold—that's ego. Love liberates. It doesn't bind. Love says, "I love you. I love you if you're in China. I love you if you're across town. I love you if you're in Harlem. I love you. I would like to be near you. I'd like to have your arms around me. I'd like to hear your voice in my ear. But that's not possible now, so I love you. Go." True love isn't about grasping on to people. It isn't about clinging to everything and everyone. It is about learning to let go. True love is free from clinging and free from bondage. True love liberates.<sup>32</sup>

During my vigorous addiction, my mother liberated me by not lecturing me about my drug use and praying for me. She gave way for me to travel the journey my God had in store me. Her faith allowed her to let go with the hope that she will get her baby son back. By God's grace, she did get it back. After my surrender to alcohol and other drugs, she did many things which made me emotional. However, two of these things I really cherish are when I left for work she went to the window and waved goodbye to me, and when I moved out with her blessing which was another sign of her liberating to God's will, she would come over while I was at work and leave food in the refrigerator with a sticky which said "from your mother, LOVE YOU." I am eternally grateful for these moments.

Mother was blessed to see her baby son obtain his Bachelor degree, two master's degrees and started working on his doctorate. She also witnessed the creation for a ministry in honor of her and saw me celebrate thirteen years of recovery.

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<sup>32</sup> Maya Angelou, "Love Liberates," <http://www.oprah.com/own-master-class/maya-angelous-master-class-quotes/all> (accessed February 1, 2018).

On January 6, 2015, my mother made her transition at age of ninety. She was surrounded by her family. Like she liberated me, I was able to liberate her, and I left nothing unsaid.

### **Father**

First thing I must say about Lester Cole Porter, aka (Big Wheel) my father, is that he did the best with what he had and knew for me and my two sisters who he fathered with my mother. Besides me and my two sisters, my father had five other children, all females. I was the only male child for my father.

I have a hard time labeling my father as an alcoholic, because he basically only drank on the weekends and appeared to be in control of his drinking. Some say that there is no such thing as a functional alcoholic, but still in my mind he was a functional alcoholic. He did not appear to be powerless over alcohol and his life was not unmanageable.

My father was calm when he was not under the influence of alcohol. When intoxicated he became another person whose actions created anxiety in the home all though he did not live there. He would insult my grandparents and used profanity; however, on his arrival to the home to see us, he would call us out by name and we ran out to him in the order he called us. He called us in chronological order and told us that we were the luckiest children in the world, and always echoed that God had a plan for everyone. We were happy to hear his voice. He was a great singer and his voice was compared to Nat King Cole. He sang on the church choir for many years.

In retrospect, he was a good provider for his last three children, my two sisters and me. He provided financial assistance every payday, took us shopping for school supplies, gave us Christmas gifts every Christmas, bought cake and ice cream on every

birthday. Today, I am grateful for him showing and providing for those important occasions.

When sober, Lester was a man of few words. I was the same when I was in active addiction. He boasted of me being his only son and made me feel special, but we did not have a father-son relationship in my view. We never played sports together, had no one to one sit down talks, do projects together or talk about being a responsible male. I don't remember my father ever telling me he loved me or was proud of me. Introspection has shown me that my father loved me in his own way and although he never echoed it, his actions said it. When I made my geographical move back to Costa Rica, he showed up for me and reassured that God had a plan for me.

Somewhere along my spiritual journey I heard that expectations are premeditated resentments. My expectations of my father blinded me from seeing the tools God was giving me through my father for future survival. He instilled in me a good work ethic, money management, cooking and keeping a house clean. Lester showed up to work on time every day even after drinking over the weekend. He would have a jar of coins saved up and a bank account. He cooked and had us over for dinner and his house was always clean. I also got my sense of style/fashion from him. He was a neat dresser, always well put together. He loved caps and wore them tilted. Today, I love caps and use them tilted.

Once I came into recovery, I realized I had practiced all those values before my active addiction. They were suspended during my active use, but were implemented again once I put down the drugs.

My father died in 1996. And by then I had returned to New York and was caught up in grip of addiction. I had a job but no money, but my family sponsored my trip to the funeral.

Did I have resentments with my father? I sure did, but let me tell how God is always working behind the scenes to heal hurts without us being aware of the work he is doing. When I traveled to my father's funeral, closure to my resentments began at the hospital morgue. In Limón at that time you could dress the dead body at hospital morgue. I was given the opportunity to help dress my father. I was not afraid of helping. My sisters and my father's domestic partner for many years were also there assisting.

When it was time to transport the body to the funeral home, the undertaker skipped over all present family members and with authority, he said I am the one to ride with him in the hearse. By then it was night, and some of the streets in Limón were not well lit. I was a bit scared, but felt privileged to be riding in the hearse with my father's corpse. I am not sure if I was chosen because I am the only male child of my father. Whatever the reason was, I am grateful for that moment.

At the wake that night many friends and family came out to pay their respect. Late at night when most people have left the wake, I was informed that someone had to stay at the funeral home with the body. Again, I was assigned to be the one who stayed until the morning. In the past, I would be afraid to stay, but God had me covered and had removed all fear. During this time, I placed a bench next to my father's casket and occasionally got up and took a glimpse of him. He looked peaceful, and I began to reflect on all he had done for me and my sisters. Gratitude began to sit in and I felt the presence of the Holy Spirit. I knew that all will be well moving forward.

In the morning one of my sisters came and relieved me. I went home and got dressed for the funeral. I had to get back to the funeral home by noon to assist with the transporting of the body to the church. I was the first to arrive at the church along with the undertaker. Slowly friends and family began to arrive for the funeral service. I can't recall what I said at service about my father, but at the end, the undertaker said it was a good message. I remember my sister Marilyn saying during her speech that my father had done the best with what he knew and had. This was a spiritual awakening moment for me; I came to the realization that my father was a good father to me and my two sisters.

After the service, there was a discussion of whether my father's domestic partner would be the one to ride in the hearse to the cemetery. Immediately, the undertaker said that I would be the one to ride in the hearse. I proudly took my position in the front seat and took the last ride with my father. This was my letting go of resentments and of my father. It's been twenty-one years, and I have never gone back to cemetery. His spirit along with all my ancestors is felt daily.

When my beloved father passed away, I was still consuming alcohol and cocaine. I received some inheritance in the form of money. When I got back to New York, the first thing I did was dropped my luggage in the lobby and went to buy drugs. In a few days, all the money was gone. However, I can now look back and see that God was preparing me for recovery in seven years. Resentment with my father was resolved before coming into recovery. I had one less issues to address.

## Sexual Abuse

Prior to me going into my personal story with sexual abuse, I feel the need to define this term. According to the Pandora's Project, sexual abuse is any sort of non-consensual sexual contact. Sexual abuse can happen to men or women of any age. Child sexual abuse is defined as any sexual act with a child performed by an adult or an older child. Child sexual abuse could include a number of acts, including but not limited to:

- Sexual touching of any part of the body, clothed or unclothed;
- Penetrative sex, including penetration of the mouth;
- Encouraging a child to engage in sexual activity, including masturbation;
- Intentionally engaging in sexual activity in front of a child;
- Showing children pornography, or using children to create pornography;
- Encouraging a child to engage in prostitution.

This same project which offers support and resources for survivors of rape and sexual abuse provided Symptoms of Child Sexual Abuse and suggested that parents and adults watch for behavior changes in children that may indicate sexual abuse, such as:

- A noticeable fear of a person or certain places;
- Unusual response from the child when asked if he or she was touched;
- Unreasonable fear of a physical exam;
- Drawings that show sexual acts;
- Abrupt changes in behavior, such as bed-wetting or losing control of his or her bowels;
- Sudden awareness of genitals and sexual acts and words;
- Attempting to get other children to perform sexual acts.<sup>33</sup>

I have no recollection of what age or how the sexual abuse started with me. I am going to estimate that it took place between the ages of six through eleven. The perpetrator was my eldest brother who lived in the same household. Looking back the only relationship, I had with him was the sexual abuse, which was not a healthy relationship. I considered my brother a thug, he went jail many times, smoked weed and

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<sup>33</sup> Pandora's Project, "What is Sexual Abuse?" <http://www.pandys.org/whatissexualabuse.html> (accessed February 2, 2018).



did not work. He hung out with friends during and night that had the same habits. He was good with the guitar.

During my first attempt at recovery, I disclosed the abuse to my mother. This was necessary for my emotional healing. My mother stated that if she had not left me to come to USA, this might not had happened. Without hesitation, I told her not to blame herself, she did the right thing to secure a better future for her children. She held my hands and told me, no matter what had happened to me, I must keep my head up.

A predator's job is to prey on his/her victim, and know exactly when to attach. They assess and seek out the right time and place. It does not matter if someone is around at all time, which is basically impossible. My grandparents took excellent care of me and were home the majority of time, but had to leave sometimes to take care of business; and my other siblings had to go to school.

My abuse took place during the day and night. Although during the day the sun was out, the inside of the house became dark. He closed all the doors and windows. At night he took me out in the yard where the toilet was, and locked me in with him. After the sexual act was done, he would always give me money and told me that he was showing me what to do with girls.

I am not sure if the abuse was predictor of my sexual preference, but I know it confused me for many years about relationships with the same sex. I thought I had to pay people to be with me intimately, and could not be intimate in the light. The place had to be in complete darkness. For many years I sought out men who reminded me of my brother and I paid them to be with me because I did not want anyone else controlling me. I have done work on myself and gotten better in the above areas.

There is more work to be done in this area of my life, but I am so grateful that I am not stuck in resentment. In early recovery, I remember attending a workshop and a young lady shared about her abuse and how it continues to affect her relationships. She was not able to engage in healthy relationship, always sought out men who were emotionally unavailable and struggled with differentiating platonic friendship from sex. I felt her pain deeply, and said to myself that I had cried my last tear about my sexual abuse. To reap the benefit of recovery, I needed to surrender to other issues or pain besides the drug. At that moment, I shed my last tear and made a conscious to let go resentments I had toward my brother. My life had gotten better, and I started to love myself more, so I wanted to continue that path. I was told that by holding on, the only person I was hurting was myself.

### **Recovery**

The phrase echoed by my angel (my mother) on Mother's Day 2003 is what led me into recovery. My obsession and compulsion to use drug was lifted immediately. Since that day, I have not had a desire for alcohol or any other drug. The next day which was Monday, with trepidation, I called an outpatient drug program which in the past I had referred and accompanied my assigned clients to, and was given an appointment for that Wednesday. I also began to attend Narcotic Anonymous meetings which I knew about. This was my spiritual awakening. My life has not been the same since my mother uttered those words to me.

When I first came into recovery, I was told to stay away from people, places, and things. I was not working at the time and stopped going around friends who used drugs and drank alcohol. I also stopped going to bars and having conversations with local drug dealers. I had a lot time on my hands. I attended my outpatient program five days a week

and attended NA meetings daily. These meetings helped me stay clean a day at a time and I started incorporating spiritual principles such as honesty, open-mindedness, and willingness into all areas of my life. I also used my free time to read books on spirituality.

As time went by, I began to love myself more and accept who I am. I was able to list my assets and liabilities. An inner exploration began because of my increased praying, quiet time, meditation, and the reading of the scriptures. These practices increased my spirituality daily. I met many addicts for whom recovery had worked, and they shared their experience, strength, and hope with me.

During my early recovery, I began to get clarity on my purpose in life and my higher power and I acquired a deeper understanding of spirituality. My spiritual journey since coming into recovery has been one of amazement and self-fulfillment. I was destined to be of service by giving my testimony of God's grace, mercy and unconditional. Additionally, there was my calling to do ministry work with vulnerable populations. The Feed the Children project became clearer to me and the work it does became a passion of mine.

My God is always working behind the scene even in the midst of chaos, disappointment, and resentment. Approximately two weeks before coming into recovery, I ran into a friend who I had stopped speaking to and she told me about her current place of employment. The day after my angel appeared, she was one of the friends I called for support, and she told me to send my resume to her for an intern position. I humbled myself and took the position as Peer Educator and a deep salary cut. I was ambivalent about taking the job because it required working with active addicts; most staff were recovering addicts.

I re-entered the work force in June 2003, a month after my God saw fit to pull me out of the dark. I incorporated spiritual practices such as meditation in the work I did with my clients, and results were favorable. I went back to college and obtained my Bachelor's degree and Master's degree in social work.

At the time, my post-graduate goal from the School of Social Work was to create a ministry and become an inspirational speaker. I have always had the desire to work with vulnerable populations such as the homeless, poor, substance abusers, HIV positive and immigrants. I also love to share how spiritual guidance helped me awaken my sense of meaning and purpose in life and developed a deeper relationship with my higher power (God). I have worked with vulnerable populations locally and internationally, and have heard many personal stories of how spiritual guidance led to restoration of sanity and a sense of purpose in life. I have benefited from spiritual guidance after twenty years of drug use and not knowing how to get out. Through compassionate listening and insightful questioning, a spiritual guide provided me with the opportunity to view all aspects of his life from a spiritual perspective and find a deeper intimacy with his higher power and his spiritual self.

My passion in life became a vision when I went on my first missionary trip to the Dominican Republic in 2007 and witnessed how vulnerable the population was; how open they were to services the missionaries offered (food, clothing, medical and prayer); and how willing they were to share their stories with strangers. From conversations with the local population and the conditions in which they lived, there was a sense that the government had forgotten about them and they in turn did not trust the government.

As a result of my trip to the Dominican Republic, I began to make trips to Costa Rica to assess the needs of several impoverished communities. Similar to the Dominican Republic, impoverished communities in the city of Puerto Limón are in need of food, clothing, medical care, and services that will empower them to become self-sufficient. In both countries families who reside in underprivileged communities do not have financial resources to feed their children three meals a day and jobs are not readily available. There are not enough clinics to provide medical services and up-to-date medical equipment is not available. Medication is not affordable. In both countries, the needy communities rely on the support for social services and counseling from the local church.

My zeal to do ministry work locally and internationally in conjunction with the primary undertaking of the social work profession and pastoral care counseling, which work to improve human well-being and help meet the basic human needs including spirituality of all people, with special attention to the needs and empowerment of individuals who are vulnerable, oppressed and living in poverty, led to the creation of the “Ministry of Redemption, Understanding, Truth, Help & Salvation, Inc.” The ministry was created for the purpose of spreading the gospel through faith-based activities, distribution of clothing/food, job training and HIV/AIDS education. The above services are currently provided locally and internationally. Services are provided to children, orphans, and homeless individuals, and any other group of individuals in need.

The ministry’s long-term goal is to create social service agencies in at least three developing countries and one in Brooklyn, New York by the year 2019. The short-term goals of the ministry are to partner with the central Episcopal Church in Puerto Limón, Costa Rica to implement a Meals on Wheels program; and further, to form a partnership

with another Episcopalian church in a deprived and crime-ridden community in the capital of Costa Rica, San Jose, to provide healthy snacks for children who attend the after-school program at the church. The Meals on Wheels in Puerto Limón will help address the proliferation of homelessness by providing a safe space for homeless individuals to receive spiritual guidance, food, clothing and referrals for housing, drug treatment and job training. The after-school program in San Jose will provide assistance with homework, arts and craft classes and parenting skills workshops for parents who are interested. Joining the church or adopting a religion will not be a prerequisite for receiving services. Spiritual guidance will, however, be available at all times for those who request it.

With my life experience and educational background, I will continue to work on expanding my ministry. I will use my grant-writing skills to request funding to create a “Meals on Wheels” ministry in Puerto Limón, Costa Rica. I also plan to create a support group for Senior Citizens in my building. The ministry will provide a buddy system to assist seniors with obtaining medical attention, food shopping, prayer and other concrete services. I plan on conducting several workshops on social work spiritual practices at my current agency and in Costa Rica. I would also like to partner with my current agency in doing HIV testing and education in developing countries.

When I started attending Narcotics Anonymous meetings almost fifteen years ago I saw everyone hugging and saying “I love you” to each other. As a result, I took the suggestion from other members to try it with family members. Today the display of affection such as hugging and kissing when greeting each and saying “Love You” is a norm among family members and friends.

Like all families, my family has strengths and weakness. Some of the strengths are spirituality, togetherness, supportive of each other, education, stable employment, encouragement, participation in outside family events and time management. Here in the USA and in Costa Rica my family members are every spiritual. They continuously seek inner peace and self-awareness. As a result, they are able to lend support to each other in time of new birth, death, marriage, among other life milestones. All my sisters obtained a higher education and are gainfully employed. They support my endeavors and show support for outside activities sponsored by my ministry. My grandfathers instilled in us the importance for showing up on time for church, school, work and any activity/event that we are involved in.

The two significant issues that have impacted my work in ministry are my life experiences of drug use and sexual abuse. The other would be my strong belief in a higher power that I call God. I will be able to give my testimony of how God never left me or forsook me.

By God's grace, my life is good just for today. I went to school and obtained a second master's degree in Pastoral Counseling and am now working on my Doctor of Ministry degree. I also launched my LCG Don't Write me off inspirational tour. Each day I love myself more, and I can show up for my family and friends. Since May 2003, I have not had any desire to use any drug and my life is manageable. I have been working at the same job for over eight years and in the same apartment over fourteen years. My finances are in good standing.

In spite of all the above, I must remain humble and teachable and always put God first in very thing I do. Below, I will share a letter I wrote to Jesus. This was an

assignment from a class I took a few years ago. As I reviewed it, I thought this would a good conclusion to my testimony.

### **Letter to Jesus**

In Matthew 5:13, you said, “you are the salt of the earth.” From my knowledge, salt has many functions, so can you tell me which of the valuable function of salt you had in mind. I read some of your friend’s (Hans-Georg Gadamer) writing for class and he stated that, “understanding how the Sachet makes itself understood is my quarry.” For now, I will seek through the reading of Matthew 5: 13-16 for an exegesis of salt and also light.

There is no doubt in my mind that you created me for several purposes and, one is to be the salt of the earth, which means as salt is used to give things flavor, I am responsible to impart your father’s goodness and mercy on earth. Now, salt had multiple purposes in your time and was not pure the majority of the time; thus it was easy to be diluted and lose its saltiness. Jesus, today you know that salt is made up of chemicals which do not allow it to lose its saltiness. Due to your gift of intelligence to man, the world is different today compared to the first century. I wonder what you have to say about this. Please let me know in your response to this letter.

I will tell you what my interpretation of being the salt of the earth derives from my experience as a Christian, a recovering addict, a social worker, an educated black gay man and the founder/president of Ruth’s Mission. With all that is happening in this dark world today and introduction of social media, money, property and prestige dilutes my saltiness from time to time; as a result, the world gets into me, instead of me getting into the world.

Jesus, you know my heart. I try to do the right things for the right reasons and apply spiritual principles in all my affairs to the best of my ability; however, due to my pride, ego, self-centeredness, I fall short many of times. I also fall short as a result of my, obsession and compulsion for making use of social media for unspiritual information. Social Media is a medium that did not exist when you commanded your disciples to be the salt of the earth. In Matthew 5: 13, you did mention that sometimes the salt will lose its saltiness. In spite of all the above, I continuously pick myself and continue to do your will.

I am so happy that your unconditional love allows me to be transparent when I write or speak with you. When you gave your command in Matthew 5:13-16, was drug addiction and homosexuality prevalent? I ask that question because, in today’s world, we are discriminated against in the church and the outside world. As a recovering addict and a gay man, I have heard many negative comments about individuals who are actively



using drugs or have used drugs, and individuals who live a gay lifestyle. As a result, sometimes I wonder how you could use me been a recovering addict and a homosexual. I thank you for all those people you have put in my path who reassures me that, regardless of how others perceive or threat me due to the above, you consider me incredibly valuable.

What a privilege it is to be commanded by you to be the guiding light of the earth. In Matthew 5:16, you said, “you are the light of the world”. You know I like being in the spotlight like a celebrity, LOL. By the way, LOL is an urban acronym which means, Laugh Out Loud. You can use it when you write back to me.

I love reading about how people lived and survived in your time. So before I sat to write you this letter, I took time to imagine what night time looked like in that time. Being a student at New York Theological Seminary, I also learned how to do hermeneutical imagination letters. Ok, enough of that, I learned that, in your time, lamps were used at night in the home for light and it was placed on a stand so it could be seen. In order words, it was not hidden. If it was, it would defeat its purpose for guiding people from the dark.

You have given man the wisdom to create electricity; as a result, lamps are rarely needed for light in this time and age; however, due to our sinful nature, it is said that we live in a dark world. I will relate to you as usual what I think, but, I want to assure you that, I rely on your interpretation 90% of the time, so please add this question to my list of questions I have asked you in this letter. I hope I am not overworking your brain, LOL.

From my contextual location, I believe you are telling me that as long as I display Christ like characters in my daily walk with you, you will not hide me and you will put me on a stand so I will be visible. I must practice ethical/moral values at church, at home, at work in my ministry and the community. I must not keep your unconditional love, mercy and grace a secret. I must go public no matter my contextual location.

But Jesus, at times I question my light due to, negative comments from others about my past life and present lifestyle. Some people think that I have a “better than” attitude. I continue to hold on to your words from Matthew 5:16, “In the same way same ways, let your light shine before men that they may see your good deeds and praise your father in heaven”.

No matter what, my number one priority is to be the salt and light for you purpose and, I will do what is right to the best of my ability. My total reliance will be on you and I will do good work for others.

Love you and hope to hear from you soon!

*Lloyd Goulbourne*

### CHAPTER 3

#### THEOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE OF DRUG USE

My research questions are guided by reading chapter seven of *Research Design* by John W. Creswell, which is a text that has been used for the research class. Creswell focuses on how to formulate research questions for qualitative and quantitative research. The Doctor of Ministry research project requires qualitative research in order to “explore the complex set of factors surrounding the central phenomenon and present the varied perspectives or meaning that participants hold.”<sup>34</sup>

#### **Theological**

In my proposal my theological question was: What are some historical theological perspectives of drunkenness? As I reflected back my drug use trajectory, I realized that I did not only used alcohol, but I also used crack and cocaine. As result, I decided to take a look at addiction as a whole. The Bible mentions drunkenness many time; however, it does not bluntly address other addictions.

My new theological research question is: What are some theological perspectives of addiction? (For this question I will use the Bible and other sacred documents as my primary source.) Being a student of the Pastoral Care cohort, a theological perspective of addiction is vital to enhance my pastoral counseling skills. Theological questions are essential in this discipline.

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<sup>34</sup> John W. Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*, 3rd ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, 2009), 129.

There are many types of addiction which are made up of obsession and compulsion. Obsession connotes a great deal of time spent on thinking about your addiction. Compulsion, once engaged in your addiction, you cannot stop. Growing up and even during my active addiction, my hermeneutic about addiction was it's a sin and only indecent individuals get caught up in this lifestyle.

The word *addiction* has two basic meanings. The first definition, and the one most of us are familiar with is "to cause to become physiologically or psychologically dependent on a habit-forming substance." Those who are addicted or "given too much wine" (Titus 1:7; 2:3), "drunkards" (1 Timothy 3:3) or "heavy drinkers" (1 Timothy 3:8) are disqualified from teaching or holding a position of authority in the church. It's clear that church leadership needs to be sober and self-controlled so that, by their example, they can teach others to be the same, for we know that "drunkards . . . shall not inherit the kingdom of God" (1 Corinthians 6:10). Believers must not be dependent upon alcohol, and it stands to reason that this would also apply to addiction to any other substance, i.e. drugs, pornography, gambling, gluttony, tobacco, etc.

The second definition of addiction is "to occupy (oneself) with or involve (oneself) in something habitually or compulsively." This speaks of an unnatural (for the Christian, at least) obsession with anything other than God: sports, work, shopping and/or acquiring "stuff," even family or children. We are to "love the Lord, your God, with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might" (Deuteronomy 6:5), which is, according to Jesus, the first and greatest commandment (Matthew 22:37-38). We can conclude then that an addiction to anything other than God Himself is wrong. God is the only thing we can (and should) occupy ourselves with habitually. To do so with anything

else draws us away from Him and displeases Him. He alone is worthy of our complete attention, love, and service. To offer these things to anything or anyone else is idolatry.

In the Bible, addiction is broken down into two basic arguments. Firstly, sin and temptation are a thing of the Devil; and secondly, the way to move away from sin, including alcohol and drug abuse, is through trust and strength found within the higher power of the Lord. So, when speaking to addiction, we're not just talking about surviving addiction; we're talking about a kind of spiritual warfare as it interrupts our path to Heaven.

While I was active in my addiction I still read the Bible, but thought that God was not living up to his promise to free me from active addiction. I read the Bible, prayed, and then would use drugs which led to unprotected sex. Whether the addiction is alcohol, drugs or sex, God offers help in His Word to break free of the addiction. Some verses in the Bible give warnings as to why you should abstain from certain sins while other verses give encouragement that an addiction can be overcome.<sup>35</sup>

Below I have cited some passages from the bible which address addiction.

**1 Corinthians 10:13 (ESV)** No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it.

**1 John 2:16 (ESV)** For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life—is not from the Father but is from the world.

**1 Corinthians 6:12 (ESV)** Flee Sexual Immorality. “All things are lawful for me,” but not all things are helpful. “All things are lawful for me,” but I will not be dominated by anything.

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<sup>35</sup> Lake View Health, “A Theology of Addiction: Christian Response to Addiction,” <https://www.lakeviewhealth.com/resources/christian-drug-rehab/theology-addiction-christian-response-addiction-part-2> (accessed February 2, 2018).

**Galatians 5:19-21 (ESV)** Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

**Proverbs 20:1 (ESV)** Wine is a mocker, strong drink a brawler, and whoever is led astray by it is not wise.

**Ephesians 5:18 (ESV)** And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit.

Addiction holds millions in bondage to substances, activities, or attractions that ruin lives. Some of the people around you, people you'd least expect, struggle daily, hourly, with addictions that shape their lives, damage their relationships, bankrupt them financially and spiritually, and hold them in a cycle of highs, lows, guilt, fear, and self-loathing. How can an addict break free? The first step is to admit what you're doing and then understand why you do what you do and seek help to overcome the captivity of addiction.

**Proverbs 20:1** Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise

**Romans 13:14** "But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof."

**1 Corinthians 6:12** "All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any."

**Ephesians 5:18-20** "And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit. Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord; Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ."

**1 John 2:16** For everything in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—comes not from the Father but from the world.

The Bible maintains two primary themes throughout its text. Firstly, sin and temptation are a thing of the Devil; and secondly, the way to move away from sin, including alcohol and drug abuse, is through trust and strength found within the higher power of the Lord. So, when speaking to addiction, we're not just talking about surviving addiction; we're talking about a kind of spiritual warfare as it interrupts our path to Heaven.

In **1 Corinthians 15:33**, the verse "Bad company ruins good morals" is a reasonable assertion. Someone who is hanging around people who are using drugs is more likely to abuse drugs. Likewise, when in recovery, it is best to stay away from the people who used to encourage you to use, to avoid relapse

1 John 3:8 says, "Walk by the Spirit and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh." If you wake up each day feeling gratitude for your sobriety and a connection to a higher power, then this will bring you joy and pleasure and after some practice, it can navigate you around alcohol or drug cravings.

My proposed Biblical question was: "What lesson about hope can be taken away from the story of Noah getting drunk which is found Genesis 9:20-25." Through an assessment of missionary work and to be a shining light, along with the name of the project (Project Hope), I decided to exegete Isaiah 61:1 and the book of Hosea.

"The spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me; he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed" (Isaiah 61:1 NIV). Jesus amplified the message in Isaiah 61:1 in the book of Luke in which he states his purpose as a man on earth. While standing in the synagogue Jesus says, "the spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim

release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor" (Luke 4: 18-19). These scriptures let me know I did not have to be defeated and hopeless no matter my social location, but through Jesus, I can become hopeful and experience victory.

The above scriptures and my experience with freedom from active addiction, being a social worker, missionary and pastoral care counselor leads me to firmly believe that Jesus came to free me from oppression and prepared me to fight for social justice and spread the good news.

The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines "oppress" in the following way: "to make someone feel sad or worried for a long period of time."<sup>36</sup> The Greek translation is "shattered into pieces, to be broken hearted and bruised."<sup>37</sup> In Luke 4:18-19, Jesus mentioned four groups: the poor, the captives, the blind and the oppressed. The poor, blind and captive can be seen as sub-groups under oppression. Jesus' mission was to save that which was lost. This salvation and good news was, and is, directed toward every area of need, poverty, and problem of humanity. By nature, man lives separated from God. He lives with a great number of misfortunes, urgently needing the good news of the love and the grace and the favor of Christ.<sup>38</sup>

My romance with alcohol and cocaine lasted twenty years. The first thing I lost as my disease of addiction progressed was my relationship with my Jesus. This loss resulted in poverty of my spirit, which was rich before I picked up my first drug. There is much

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<sup>36</sup> Merriam-Webster Learners Dictionary, <http://learnersdictionary.com>, s. v. "oppress."

<sup>37</sup> Strong's Concordance, <http://biblehub.com/greek/2352.htm>, s. v. "oppress."

<sup>38</sup> Elfriede Janz de Veron, "The Ministry of Jesus Christ," *The Source Direction* (Fall 2012): 293.

spiritual and moral poverty.<sup>39</sup> When Jesus spoke about the poor, for me he meant deficiencies in all areas of our lives. During active addiction I was not impoverished. I had an education, job, shelter, food and clean clothes. Throughout my drug use I knew it was Jesus/God who provided my basic needs; however, I was spiritually bankrupt. My preoccupation became thinking of ways and means to get my next hit of cocaine. My obsession with drugs created a distance between Jesus/God and me. I no longer prayed daily, read the scripture, spent quiet time with God, meditated or attended church.

Deep in my soul I believed that Jesus came to rescue lost souls who at one time had a relationship with him. Has not God chosen those who are poor in the eyes of the world to be rich in faith and to inherit the Kingdom he promised those who love him (James 2:5). No matter how poor my spirit became, I still believed Jesus would free me from active addiction. I just did not know when.

In Luke 4:18(b), Jesus proclaimed that he was sent by his father to proclaim freedom for the prisoners. My dependence on drugs kept me imprisoned for twenty years and it was not behind bars in an institution. I was locked out of reality and was in denial about how the consuming of drugs had made my life unmanageable in every area of my life. I was unable to leave my block where the drugs were available, left work daily and rushed home to get to the bar to have drinks and sort out the drug dealers. On weekends I would stock up on cocaine and alcohol and would not leave my home until Monday to return to work, if I made it to work. I did not attend family gatherings, and after some time even stopped going to the bar and would isolate myself in my home. Today, many think they are free, but we realize that they are imprisoned by such things as addiction,

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<sup>39</sup> Ibid.



hate, violence, hypocrisy, envy, greed, and many other sins.<sup>40</sup> The Gospel does not make any reference to Jesus freeing any individual from prison. There is no doubt that he could have done that because he had the power to do so. Addiction for me is a demon, and Jesus freed many people who were possessed by demons. Knowing that gave me hope of freedom from my demon, drug addiction.

Luke 4:8 states that Jesus came for the blind. My Jesus came not only to give sight to the blind, but to free people from all physical suffering. For many years, I suffered physically and emotionally. While consuming drugs, I was not compliant with my medical appointments knowing that I suffered from hypertension and borderline diabetes. I also ignored the pain of sexual abuse throughout my addiction which caused depression and anxiety. During this time I held onto the following statement uttered to me in my darkest moments, “God is the same God, yesterday, today, and forever.” This statement led me to reflect on Jesus healing the leper in Galilee (Matthew 8:14); healing of the paralytic at Capernaum (Matthew 9:2-8); the woman with issues of the blood (Matthew 9:20-22); and the two blind men at Capernaum (Matthew 9:27-31). These scriptures renewed hope for me when I hit bottom. I continuously cried out to him and put my trust in him like I did before addiction. As an addict, I wanted instant relief. However, I realized that Jesus sometimes healed instantly and sometimes it was a process. I had to trust Jesus’ timing and keep in mind that he is always on time.

The last group of people Jesus mentioned in his sermon was the oppressed. In Luke 4:18 Jesus states that he came to set the oppressed free. Over the span of my twenty years of addiction, I was socially oppressed and considered an outcast due to my

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<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 294.

addiction and not considered a productive member of society. I was unable to remain employed for substantial time and was in debt. My lifestyle as a Black, gay, Christian man and addict also led to oppression. I was told that my gay lifestyle was a sin and I would go to hell. I was oppressed by pain and the hurts of the past, such as sexual abuse.

After twenty years of being a slave to alcohol and cocaine and several attempts to stop consuming both mood and mind-altering substances, my Jesus – via my mother – came and freed me from oppression on Mother’s Day 2003. The message was, “You don’t have to suffer anymore.” After hearing that, the obsession and compulsion to consume both substances was lifted and I totally surrendered knowing that I did not have to fight anymore. As a result of my total surrender I made a decision to seek help/treatment for my addiction. I had tried many times to abstain from drug use, but was not successful. This time I felt ready for what God had in store for me, so I surrendered. When the cloud was lifted, I clearly saw why Jesus came for me and what he means to me. He set me free from spiritual and moral poverty, captivity, physical suffering and oppression. Being drug-free for eleven years, there is no doubt in my mind that my Jesus came for the poor, the prisoners, the blind and the oppressed.

My belief is that Jesus was a social worker, pastoral care counselor and definitely, a missionary. He is no longer on earth but left the Holy Spirit to reside in chosen people to continue the work. I am one of those individuals whom he cleaned up and is using as his extended hand to continue freeing the oppressed and spreading the good news to the poor.

The main undertaking of the social work profession, pastoral care counseling and ministry can be compared to Jesus’ mission on earth. I became a social worker and now a

pastoral care counselor because I like working with the vulnerable and oppressed who are living in poverty and are seeking spiritual healing. These professions also fight for social justice, and I believe change comes with social action and spiritual awareness. Doing ministry work in Latin America also allows me to spread the Good news and provide resources to the poor.

Liberation theology, which was introduced by Gustavo Gutierrez, is consistent with social work and ministry, which is a response to the condition of poverty which reflects on Jesus' teachings as it relates freedom from unjust economic, political and social conditions. Doing mission work in Costa Rica, Panama and the Dominican Republic, I have witnessed some of the devastation of oppression and loss of hope in God.

The poor in Latin America have started to move in the struggle to affirm their human dignity and their status as sons and daughters of God.<sup>41</sup> Like in the United States, oppressed Christians in Costa Rica, Panama and Dominican Republic are participating in protest against the oppressors. They remain faithful that Jesus will set them free from poverty, captivity, physical suffering and oppression. As I travel through the poor barrios in Central America, I am reminded of Jesus' humility. People are content with the basic necessities. I sometimes don't fully understand why so many people are living in poverty; but that does not stop me from telling them what Jesus has done for me and the fact that he can do the same for them. Indeed, although a description of poverty is important, so long as its causes are not identified, we are unable to do anything about it, or we are limited to trying to heal social rifts that require much deeper and broader solutions. As a

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<sup>41</sup> Christopher Rowland, *The Cambridge Companion to Liberation Theology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 30.

social worker, I sit with individuals, families from the barrios and even politicians to assess social/political issues and what is being done to address them.

For a good two-thirds of the human family there is no such thing as, “life in all its fullness” because they are impoverished, living on the edge of death in stark, economically conditioned poverty. They are hungry, they have no shelter, no shoes, no medicine for their children, no clean water to drink, no work and they see no way of getting their oppressors off their backs.<sup>42</sup>

There are no scriptures that define Jesus as a politician who came to address social or political issues; however, the Jesus I know has done so when he preached the good news.

Most politicians incline to give speeches during their campaign that address better jobs, housing, better health and how they will secure money from the rich via taxes to keep their promises. Well, from my experience many politicians have come and gone and life for the poor has not gotten any better. My Jesus has delivered me and continues to do so. In what the Gospel of Luke portrays as the inaugural sermon of Jesus’ ministry, Jesus announces that the reason for his anointing by God and the purpose of his mission in the world are one and the same—to proclaim radical economic, social and political change: “The spirit of the lord is upon me, /because he has anointed me/ to bring good news to the poor.”<sup>43</sup> Prophetic Christian leaders like King are viewed by their community as leading God’s people out of oppression just as Moses and Jesus did.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Dorothee Sölle, “Life in its Fullness,” *Ecumenical Review* 35, no. 4 (October 1983): 377.

<sup>43</sup> Obery Hendricks, *The Politics of Jesus* (New York: Doubleday, 2006), 7.

<sup>44</sup> Peter Goodwin Heltzel, *Jesus & Justice* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2009), 50.

## Hosea

As a firm believer in the Lord's words and promises from a young age, I am not embarrassed to admit that my biblical hermeneutic journey began recently. I chose the book of Hosea for this exegesis because I have never heard of or read this book before. For some divine reason the name aroused interest/curiosity in me; thus, I immediately began to read the book and doing research. Both led to shedding of tears and spiritual identification.

The genres of the book of Hosea are referred to as a narrative history and prophetic oracle in which the main characters are Hosea, Gomer (wife) and their children. According Norman K. Gottwald, the book of Hosea is divided into two unequal parts; (1) Chapters 1-3, narratives and sayings about the prophet's marriage and offspring; (2) chaps 4-14, judgment and tempered salvation speeches. This book is the first book in what is called "The section of Minor Prophets." Its considered a minor prophet simply because it's a short book/story; however, does not mean that its significance is less important than larger books of prophets.<sup>45</sup>

The purpose of this book was to show how the Lord used Hosea to prophesize to the people of the Northern Kingdom, to make them aware of their spiritual betrayal (adultery) and of the Lord assured unconditional love for his sinful people. This reminds me of Mother's Day 2003 when the Lord God sent a message to me through my mother while I was high on Cocaine and alcohol.

Caught up in the grip of paranoia, I was unable to go down stairs to help her up with the gifts my sisters gave her. The message from the Lord was simple, "Thank God

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<sup>45</sup> Norman K. Gottwald, *The Hebrew Bible: A Brief Socio-Literary Introduction* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995), 12.

for the girls.” At that moment my obsession and compulsion to use drugs was lifted after twenty years of drug abuse and turning my back on the Lord. The Lord does strange things at times which we don’t understand or cannot make sense off. In Hosea chapter one which is the focus of this paper, the J, E, P source is used. The J source because the Lord is used instead of God, E source, due to the focus on the Northern Kingdom and P source, because the chapter shows that even when all seem lost, God remained present with Israel and the story was in chronological order.<sup>46</sup>

Hosea is been called by the Lord to prophesize to the people of Israel because of their sinful lifestyle, instructed to married an unfaithful woman who will bore three children of his and share hope of the Lord’s unfailing love for his people.

Hosea 1:1, states that the “the word of the Lord came to Hosea.” One might conclude from this approach of speech that prophets did not speak out of their own understanding.

Hosea 1; 2, the Lord says to Hosea, “ Go take for yourself a wife of whoredom and have children of whoredom, for the land commits great whoredom by forsaking the Lord.” Hosea obeyed the Lord and he married Gomer daughter of Dib lain. The marriage between Hosea and Gomer can be seen as a symbol of the relationship between Yahweh and the people of Israel at that time. The people of Israel were unfaithful by serving other Gods. In this scenario, Israel is represented by an unfaithful woman who eventually violates the obligation of marriage (Hosea 3. 1-5). This reminds me of the years when cocaine and alcohol became my God. I worshiped both daily and did unspiritual things to get the next high.

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<sup>46</sup> See Dennis Bratcher, “JEDP: Sources in the Pentateuch,” <http://www.crivoice.org/jedp.html> (accessed February 2, 2018).

Hosea 1:4-9, depicts the birth of Hosea's three children and the Lord's command to give each child a prophetic name. The first child was a male and the Lord said to Hosea "name him Jezreel." Jezreel is a valley where a lot of blood was shed in the history of Israel. The Northern Kingdom will pay for past bloodshed.

The second child was a female and the Lord commanded Hosea to name her Lo-Ruhamah. The translation of this name is unloved/pity. God's message to the Northern Kingdom in this naming was destruction will come to the Northern Kingdom in the future. Then there was a third male child and Lord said, "Name him Lo-Ammi, for you are not my people."

In Hosea 1:10, the Lord says he will keep the covenant he made with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. "The people of Judah and the people Israel shall be gathered together, and they shall appoint for themselves one head; and they take possession of the land."

## CHAPTER 4 PSYCHOLOGICAL PROSPECTIVE OF DRUG ADDICTION

### **Psychological Perspective Research Question**

What are some psychological perspectives of drug addiction? (For this perspective I look at a few universal perspectives and then apply James William's theory.) As a pastoral care counselor, it's vital that I be able to see actions and relations outside of the theological framework. This will help me take a look at behaviors outside of the church structure. It will help combine the theological perspective to provide a more holistic understanding of individuals.

My research questions in this chapter and others were guided by reading chapter seven of *Research Design* by John W. Creswell, which is a text that been used for the research class. Creswell focuses on how to formulate research questions for qualitative and quantitative research. The Doctor of Ministry research project requires qualitative research; thus, my focus as I read this chapter was on how to formulate a qualitative research question. In qualitative research, the intent is to explore the complex set of factors surrounding the central phenomenon and present the varied perspectives or meaning that participants hold.<sup>47</sup>

Besides Brooklyn, New York, I have traveled to Panama, Santo Domingo and Costa Rica sharing my testimony about my addiction to alcohol and cocaine; interestingly, the psychological perspective of addiction is not unique to the United

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<sup>47</sup> John W. Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*, 3rd ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE, 2009), 129.



States. We define drug addiction as the final outcome of a process that begins with occasional drug-taking, and ends with consumption of excessive amounts of drug to the detriment of society and the individual.<sup>48</sup>

Although this paper is addressing drug addiction, addiction can be to anything that alters you mood and takes you outside of yourself. Once you start you can't stop. Addiction is a condition that results when a person ingests a substance (e.g., alcohol, cocaine, nicotine) or engages in an activity (e.g., gambling, sex, shopping) that can be pleasurable but the continuation of which becomes compulsive and interferes with ordinary responsibilities and concerns, such as work.

According to Health Guidance for Better Health, there are behavioral addictions perhaps not as well-known. It continues to say that people engaging in the behaviors likely don't even realize that they have an addiction; they figure it's just something that they enjoy doing. Some of the most common behavioral addictions are sex, gambling, eating, exercise, shopping and computer/internet.<sup>49</sup>

Though the mentioned behaviors are ones that most people enjoy on a regular basis, and think they need these things in order to feel normal, they have become an addiction. Also if an individual turns to these things every time he/she has a bad day, need to feel better, or use them to fill an empty feeling; it is time to seek help.

There is not much literature to prove that the majority of these behaviors may cause any damage to one's health, but can they cause damage in a number of other ways.

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<sup>48</sup> Gail Winger, James H Woods, Chad M Galuska, and Tammy Wade-Galuska, "Behavioral Perspectives on the Neuroscience of Drug Addiction," *Journal of the Experimental Analysis of Behavior* 84, no. 3 (November 2005): 667-681.

<sup>49</sup> Mark Goddard, "The Nature of Addiction," <http://www.healthguidance.org/entry/17894/1/The-Nature-of-Addiction.html> (accessed February 2, 2018).

For example, excessive shopping and gambling can cause major financial trouble; computer and internet addictions will lead you to waste time, never accomplish anything and become isolated. Additionally, these addictions can also cause damage to one's self-esteem over time as the effects really start to show.

People commonly fall into addiction because they begin using drugs to mask particular emotions that they are going through. The abuse makes them feel good and forget about the problem at hand. Eventually they think they can't live without drugs. Prescription drugs, street drugs and alcohol are more available than ever. I used for many years to mask my emotions about sexuality, low self-esteem and sexual abuse.

[U]sers have personality traits that predispose them to drug use. These traits include low self-esteem and low self-confidence, low trust in others, and a need for thrills and stimulation. In effect, drug users have inadequate personalities, or personality defects, that make them prone to drug use, and once they start using drugs, their personality problems multiply.<sup>50</sup>

Working with addicts during my addiction was insane. At the time I thought I was better than them, because I had an education, a job, a place to live and had never been to prison. It took me a long time to grasp why people, including myself, become addicts.

Many people

Don't understand why or how other people become addicted to drugs. They may mistakenly think that those who use drugs lack moral principles or willpower and that they could stop their drug use simply by choosing to. In reality, drug addiction is a complex disease, and quitting usually takes more than good intentions or a strong will. Drugs change the brain in ways that make quitting hard, even for those who want to.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> Saylor Foundation, *Social Problems: Continuity and Change*, Chapter 7, [http://www.saybordotorg.github.io/text\\_social\\_explaining\\_drug\\_use](http://www.saybordotorg.github.io/text_social_explaining_drug_use) (accessed February 4, 2018). The original text, Steven E. Barkan, *Understanding and Changing the Social World* was adapted by the Saylor Foundation under a Creative Commons Attribution-Non Commercial-Share Alike 3.0 License.

<sup>51</sup> NIH, National Institute on Drug Abuse, "Understanding Drug Use and Addiction," <https://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/drugfacts/understanding-drug-use-addiction> (accessed February 4, 2018).

Drug addiction is a chronic, often relapsing brain disease that causes compulsive drug seeking and use, despite harmful consequences to the drug addict and those around them. Drug addiction is a brain disease because the abuse of drugs leads to changes in the structure and function of the brain.<sup>52</sup>

What people often underestimate is the complexity of drug addiction-- that it is a disease that impacts the brain, and because of that, stopping drug abuse is not simply a matter of willpower. Through scientific advances we now know much more about how exactly drugs work in the brain, and we also know that drug addiction can be successfully treated to help people who want to stop abusing drugs and resume productive lives.

As a social worker I thought it was important to share the definition from the *DSM-IV*, Substance Dependence Criteria

Addiction (termed substance dependence by the American Psychiatric Association) is defined as a maladaptive pattern of substance use leading to clinically significant impairment or distress, as manifested by three (or more) of the following, occurring any time in the same 12-month period:

1. Tolerance, as defined by either of the following: (a) A need for markedly increased amounts of the substance to achieve intoxication or the desired effect or (b) Markedly diminished effect with continued use of the same amount of the substance.
2. Withdrawal, as manifested by either of the following: (a) The characteristic withdrawal syndrome for the substance or (b) The same (or closely related) substance is taken to relieve or avoid withdrawal symptoms.
3. The substance is often taken in larger amounts or over a longer period than intended.
4. There is a persistent desire or unsuccessful efforts to cut down or control substance use.
5. A great deal of time is spent in activities necessary to obtain the substance (such as visiting multiple doctors or driving long distances), use the substance (for example, chain-smoking), or recover from its effects.
6. Important social, occupational, or recreational activities are given up or reduced because of substance use.
7. The substance use is continued despite knowledge of having a persistent physical or psychological problem that is likely to have been caused or exacerbated by the substance (for example, current cocaine use despite recognition of cocaine-induced depression or continued drinking despite recognition that an ulcer was made worse by alcohol consumption).

DSM-IV criteria for substance

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<sup>52</sup> WebMD, "Drug Abuse, Addiction, and the Brain," <http://www.webmd.com/mental-health/addiction> (accessed February 4, 2018).

dependence include several specifiers, one of which outlines whether substance dependence is with physiologic dependence (evidence of tolerance or withdrawal) or without physiologic dependence (no evidence of tolerance or withdrawal). In addition, remission categories are classified into four subtypes: (1) full, (2) early partial, (3) sustained, and (4) sustained partial; on the basis of whether any of the criteria for abuse or dependence have been met and over what time frame. The remission category can also be used for patients receiving agonist therapy (such as methadone maintenance) or for those living in a controlled, drug-free environment.<sup>53</sup>

In “The Varieties of Religious Experiences,” William James points out two types of attitude in people who have powerful religious experiences: optimism (healthy-minded) and pessimism (sick soul).

The healthy minded are people who appear to be ecstatic at all times and are somehow convinced that life is essentially good. They are always glowing no matter what life presents them with. If you don’t know their narrative you would think that they were born with a silver spoon in their mouth. Sometimes they close their eyes to the darker side of life by not paying attention to sickness, adversities, iniquities and even sin. It’s almost natural for them to give others the benefit of the doubt in all situations and see the positive and beautiful side in everything. Criticizing others is not part of their nature. These people are known as optimists.

On the other hand, James says that there are individuals who live in pain continuously, because they see the world as evil. These are people who tend to be unhappy all the time and isolate themselves from the healthy minded people. They continuously seek for their purpose in life but never see the light at the end of the tunnel.

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<sup>53</sup> DSM-IV Substance Dependence Criteria, [https://www.danya.com/dlc/bup/pdf/Dependence\\_DSM.PDF](https://www.danya.com/dlc/bup/pdf/Dependence_DSM.PDF) (February 4, 2018). Source: *American Psychiatric Association. Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*. 4th ed. (Washington, DC: American Psychiatric Association, 2000).

Sick souls easily give up on life and seek for others to pull them out of their misery. These individuals are categorized as pessimists.

I have come to the realization that my temperament has allowed me to experience healthy mindedness and sick soul traits at different point of my life. I will take a look at my strong faith from age three through twenty-four, despair from twenty-five through forty-three, and restoration from forty-three to the present.

As a child my grandparents instilled in me that happiness is what I should always strive for in life. If we were to ask the question: “what is human life’s chief concern?” one of the answers we should receive would be: “it is happiness.”<sup>54</sup> Religion was the way to happiness and my perception of religion from an early age was attending church and reading the Bible. There was a marriage between religion and happiness for me. With such relations between religion and happiness, it is perhaps not surprising that men come to regard the happiness which is religious belief as a proof of its truth.<sup>55</sup>

From childhood people would always tell me that I had a smile which expressed happiness at all time. As I grew into a teenager, I was asked by teachers and others if I did not have any problems, and was also sought out by older people for advice on being happy. I remember telling them that it was God shining through me.

Like a healthy-minded person, I believed that action and consequence was an act of God putting one’s life in perspective. I believed that life was good, although growing up we did not have any electrical appliances in the house, went to bed many times hungry, used second hand clothes and saw my grandmother sick all the time. Even with

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<sup>54</sup> William James, “The Varieties of Religious Experience,” *Writings 1902–1910* (New York: Library of America, 2009), 51.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

being sexually molested and not growing up with my father, life was good and God was going to make it better.

According to William James there are two types of religious optimism; simple religious optimism and complex optimism. He says that individuals who have simple religious optimism are naturally optimistic, and those who have complex optimism have to work at being optimistic. I considered myself a simple optimist during the following milestones in my life: migrating to the New York to be united with my mother and have a better life, graduating high school, getting my first full time job, traveling to other countries and leasing my first apartment.

When I was introduced to cocaine and alcohol at age 24, slowly over a period of time my addiction progressed and I became a complex optimist. Each day I found myself working harder than the day before to keep a positive outlook. I thought I was happy until the drugs and alcohol ran out; and that is when I would pray asking God to lift the obsession and compulsion to use drugs.

The drugs began to create a shade over my natural happiness. The first thing my addiction took from me was my spirituality, my connection with my God to which I attributed my happiness. In the first place, happiness, like every other emotional state, has blindness and insensibility to opposing facts given it as its instinctive weapon.<sup>56</sup>

I think that an individual's temperament can be altered by life changing events such as death, culture shock and drugs. Cocaine did that to me from the age of 24 to 43. When I was introduced to it, like a sick soul, I thought it would help me deal with my molestation, sexuality and low self-esteem. As my addiction progressed, I saw no light at

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<sup>56</sup> James, "The Varieties of Religious Experience," 56.

the end of the tunnel. I prayed for removal of the pessimistic feelings, but I needed more than minor adjustments in order to deal with life on its terms.

I lost all sense of purpose in my life and slowly isolated myself from family and friends. The drugs became my lover and best friend. The blaming game became a daily routine for me. I was unable to see what part I played in the shift. Slowly, I realized that I was the one who picked up the drug. I was not forced.

Somewhere deep in my soul I began to see the drug as something evil which was shedding light on unaddressed issues; thus, there was hope to make adjustments in my environment which would lead to changes in my temperament. There are people for whom evil means only maladjustment with things, a wrong correspondence of one's life with the environment.<sup>57</sup> I would need to remove myself from people, places, and things which were conducive to drug use. Such evil as this is curable, in principle at least, upon the natural plane, for merely by modifying either one of the things, or both at once.<sup>58</sup>

When God removed the obsession and compulsion for using drugs, I stopped socializing with friends who did drugs; stopped frequenting places, such as bars; and most of all, I had to change my thinking. As I created a distance between the drug and myself the cloud was lifted and started to see the light at end of the tunnel. As I continue to address my past and present, I have become a healthy-minded individual again. We considered the healthy-minded temperament, the temperament which has a constitutional

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<sup>57</sup> Philosophicalsociety.com, "The Healthy-Minded & Sick Soul," <http://philosophicalsociety.com/Archives/The%20Healthy-Minded%20&%20Sick%20Soul.htm> (accessed May 13, 2014).

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

incapacity for prolonged suffering, and in which the tendency to see things optimistically is like a water of crystallization in which the individual's character is set.<sup>59</sup>

Finally, my religious experience could be interpreted differently if I had used Sigmund Freud's theory about religion. He basically believed that religion is an illusion, which to me sounds like he is saying that religion does not exist. If I were to apply his theory about religion to my religious trajectory, I would be blaming everyone for the present world crisis and would not believe in God's grace and mercy. I would not practice forgiveness and unconditional love toward my fellow men. Freud believed that religious beliefs are delusions which are not subject to proof.

My religious experiences would also be different because I would not fear God and would not practice his commandments. I would think that the sick soul was the norm and that there is no way out of darkness or life's adversities. I would have still be caught up in my addiction and thinking that it's ok to steal my mother's money to support my habit. I would manipulate my friends to obtain money to use. I would not be remorseful about anything. Giving back to my community would seem optional or dependent on what the community or my neighbors have done for me.

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<sup>59</sup> James, "The Varieties of Religious Experience," 56.



## CHAPTER 5

### SOCIAL AND CULTURAL ANALYSIS

#### **How Do Cultural and Social Norms Contribute to Drug Addiction?**

We have discovered that the nature of addiction is not solely based on free will to use, or an individual's conscious choice to use, but may have deeper influences. The nature of drug addiction is three-fold: biological, psychological, and social. Although humans may be biologically and psychologically predisposed to drug use and addiction, they may often be driven towards that state by social and cultural influences. To what extent environmental stimuli affect a person's vulnerability to addiction is unknown and may be varying.<sup>60</sup>

Sociocultural beliefs can shape the approach to and behavior regarding substance use and abuse. Culture plays a central role in forming the expectations of individuals about potential problems they may face with drug use.<sup>61</sup> For the readers' understanding, sociocultural perspective can be utilized in several disciplines such as psychology and even pastoral care assessment, to gather information which brings awareness of circumstances surrounding individuals and how their behaviors are affected exclusively by their surrounding social and cultural factors.

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<sup>60</sup> Tammy Saah, "The Evolutionary Origins and Significance of Drug Addiction," *Harm Reduction Journal* 2, no. 8 (June 2005), <https://harmreductionjournal.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/1477-7517-2-8> (accessed February 4, 2018).

<sup>61</sup> Patrick Abbott and Duane M. Chase, "Culture and Substance Abuse: Impact of Culture Affects Approach to Treatment," *Psychiatric Times* 25, no. 1 (January 2008), <http://www.psychiatrictimes.com/addiction/culture-and-substance-abuse-impact-culture-affects-approach-treatment> (accessed February 4, 2018).

I was born in Costa Rica and lived there until the age of thirteen. Alcohol which was my first drug of choice is widely accepted in this country. The majority of men in this country begin to drink at an early age. It's acceptable to go and have a drink at the bar during lunch break and then return to work. From recent conversations with natives, this is still an acceptable practice throughout the country.

The next drug that is widely accepted is marijuana. Among all drugs, alcohol primarily has served to encourage social interaction. It has been called a social lubricant. When asked at a social gathering, if you would like a drink, it's assumed you are being offered alcohol.

In Costa Rica, I grew up with my maternal grandparents who did not consume alcohol or smoke. My father who I did not live with us was an alcoholic, but was a responsible man in term of work ethics and providing the necessities for me and my sisters. It was normal for us to walk from bar to bar looking for my father after Sunday school.

As I mentioned in my testimony, I had my first drink with my father at about the age of eighteen. At that time, I had already migrated to the United States to live with my mother who was a social drinker, but never encouraged me to drink. It happened when I returned to Costa Rica on vacation and my father could not fathom that I did not drink, so he took me to a bar and introduced me to alcohol. Now I know that my father's intention was not for me to become an alcoholic/drug addict. I think he just saw it as part of fatherhood. All my maternal and paternal uncles drink heavily and two of my brothers smoked marijuana. My uncles, like my father, were functional; however, my brothers were not. They did not work and were incarcerated on many occasions.

According to the sociocultural model, the cultural standards of a society and the negative effects of culture and society on the individual behavior cause addiction. Many cultural standards are quite subtle, but the effect is powerful nonetheless. For example, people in the United States not only tolerate intoxication, but also consider it humorous. Audiences find it entertaining when television sit-coms, movies, and comedians depict intoxicated characters in a humorous manner.<sup>62</sup>

Many different factors influence addiction and recovery. So far, we have discussed the biological and psychological influences. However, there are also sociological forces. These forces cause entire groups of people to be more vulnerable to addiction. If you are a member of one of these groups, then you are more vulnerable.<sup>63</sup> I grew up in a vulnerable environment which was prone to addiction. When I did a family genogram, I saw the pattern of alcoholism among males in my family. The term “alcoholic” or “addict” was never used for my father, uncles, and brothers. What I heard frequently was, “they drink or smoke a lot.” I never had a conversation with male family members about motives for their drinking and smoking. Research shows that people of African and Afro-Caribbean descent’s drinking problems can be traced back to destructive patterns in their cultural history, such as marginalization and oppression. Oppression can lead to feelings of hopelessness, loss, fear, distrust, and despair.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> Tom Horvath, Kaushik Misra, Amy K. Epner, and Galen Morgan Cooper, “Sociocultural Model of Addiction and Recovery Implications,” <https://www.mentalhelp.net/articles/sociocultural-model-of-addiction-and-recovery-implications> (accessed March 18, 2016).

<sup>63</sup> Tom Horvath, Kaushik Misra, Amy K. Epner, and Galen Morgan Cooper, “Addiction and Sociological Influences: Culture and Ethnicity,” *American Mental Health Counselors Association*, <http://www.amhc.org/1408-addictions/article/48420-addiction-and-sociological-influences-culture-and-ethnicity> (accessed March 18, 2016).

<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

Three primary socio-cultural influences are important for this discussion as it pertains to “how do people get addicted?” These are culture, family, and social support.<sup>65</sup> Awareness of these systems is crucial for recovery. Assessment of the above system is needed to come up with an effective treatment plan. Accurate assessment requires sufficient information about a problem or situation. It also requires a theoretical framework to guide how the practitioner will gather, analyze, and interpret the information.<sup>66</sup> The use of a family genogram assessment and intervention is also useful. The genogram has been established as a practical framework for understanding family patterns.<sup>67</sup>

Providing pastoral care is to be present so you can hear the patient/client’s narrative. No two narratives are the same. It’s important not to compare stories, but to identify the variables. No single or generic set of variables explains the misuse of substances for every individual. Depending on an individual’s biological makeup, development stage, and interaction with various environmental forces, individual risk, vulnerability, and resilience to substance abuse and addiction will vary for different factors at different times.<sup>68</sup>

Systems theories presents us with different ways of looking at how environment plays a vital role in shaping an individual; and the systems within their environment plays an important role in individual/family development. My culture, family, friends, school,

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<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

<sup>66</sup> Roberta R. Greene, *Human Behavior Theory & Social Work Practice*, 3rd ed. (New Brunswick, NJ: Aldine Transaction, 2008), 18.

<sup>67</sup> Monica McGoldrick, Randy Gerson, and Sylvia Shallenberger, *Genograms: Assessment and Intervention* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1999), 1.

<sup>68</sup> R. C. Jiloha, “Social and Cultural Aspects of Drug Abuse in Adolescents,” *Delhi Psychiatry Journal* 12, no. 2 (October 2009): 167-175.

church, and employment have all shaped my cognitive thinking. All these systems molded me before I migrated to the USA and after I got to the USA. Generally, cognitive theory suggests that the best way to understand and consider the contribution of cultural differences in person-environment transactions is through the individual's own view of self and reality, a view that has incorporated personally relevant cultural information.<sup>69</sup> This theory allows me to not judge myself and others due to their ethnicity, race, and religion, lack of religion, sexuality, or drug of choice. I am forced to look at self, before I put on my social worker and pastoral care hat.

As I analyze my drug addiction trajectory, I became aware that all active or recovering addicts' stories are not the same. The feeling we all identify with is pain. As I hear stories, I realize that not all addicts have been sexually abused, come from an oppressive environment, been to prison, been homeless, eat out of garbage cans, prostituted themselves, or stole from their love ones. Some addicts come into recovery with all their material things, others come with nothing. I have learned that addiction is a family disease. It affects everyone, even if they are not using substances. Many loved ones blame themselves for the addiction, are up late at night wondering if their family member who is using is ok, and become fearful of family members who are active addicts. Even when the family members come into recovery, family members worry about relapse.

From my own experience with my addiction to alcohol and cocaine, I can safely say that it impacted negatively on the following — relationships, family life, education, employment, health, personality, and finances. I isolated from my friends and family,

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<sup>69</sup> Greene, 18.

stopped going to college, did not show up for work, did not go to the doctor for check-ups, and did not pay my bills.

A society's culture includes many institutions such as the family, kinship, religion, education, economy, political organization, law, art, and others. All of these play some role in the acculturative process, and if marked by integration and interrelational harmony, the individual acquires confidence in his interdependence and interaction with fellow members in his culture. He can expect or predict certain reactions from his fellows indicated by cues in a symbolic system. In contrast when change disrupts the system and destroys consistency in the behavior patterns, the member becomes uncertain not knowing what to expect and is fearful of interactional consequences with resultant anxiety.<sup>70</sup>

Often, the very problem a person is attempting to escape through substance abuse can become magnified through their habit. In the case of cocaine, a new study indicates that chronic users harm their ability to interact socially. In which case the person seeking to intensify life's experiences winds up isolating themselves from one of life's key joys – social contact.<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> George J. Jennings, "American Culture and Drug Use," *Journal of American Scientific Affiliation* 20 (December 1968): 104-114.

<sup>71</sup> Promises Treatment Centers, "Regular Cocaine Use Appears to Damage Social Skills," posted March 12, 2014 <https://www.promises.com/articles/cocaine/cocaine-damages-social-skills/> (accessed February 4, 2018).

## CHAPTER 6 IMPLEMENTING MY PLAN

The primary goal of my demonstration project is to bring awareness to the positive resources in Limón for the youths and to the dangers of drug use among the young people of Puerto Limón.

### **First Site Team Meeting**

The first site meeting took place on a Sunday afternoon at a new café in Puerto Limón close to a beach. The owner of the café was also interested in hearing about the project. Finger food and natural drinks were provided for the team. Present were Marva Dixon, Margaret Simpson, Hernan Gray, Kendall Cayasso and Michael Lopez. All site members are proficient in the English language.

For this meeting, New York Theological Seminary provided brochures and pens which were distributed to the site team. I had emailed the members information prior to meeting about the doctoral program and role of site team. Site team received gift bag with some novelties and The Brooklyn Tabernacle CD (Pray). The following was covered in the first meeting. Keep in mind that I do not reside in Costa Rica, thus, the meeting agenda is extensive.

- Meeting was opened with a prayer.
- Each site member introduced themselves and their profession
- Doctoral candidate gave an overview of the doctoral program and other programs at NYTS. Brochures were distributed.
- Explanation of what the demonstration project is was given.

- We reviewed the responsibilities of site team members, and all members agreed to adhere to their responsibilities.
- We discussed the formation of the Demonstration Project Team. They suggested a youth group that is a member of a youth committee in Limón.
- As a team, they reviewed the competencies and pointed out the ones they felt I needed to further develop. These members worked with me on several projects prior to this one, thus they have knowledge of my skills.
- We came up with a working name for the project (Don't write me off, project hope, Proyecto esperanza)
- We reviewed the challenge statement. Team agreed that this is a needed project to bring more awareness to the drug problem among the youth in Limón. We all agreed that the youth need to see more messages of hope.
- Locations for workshops were discussed. As a team we decided that workshops can be done for which we invite several schools, youth groups and churches.
- In terms of evaluation, it was unanimous that a survey about drug use would not be an effective method. We need to conduct workshops as a focus group and evaluate by conversation and show of hands. We will continue to assess this process.
- The goal of the project was examined with possible revisions during implementation process. The goal of this project is to increase awareness about drug use through workshops, presentation and sharing my experience with substance use. The result will be a public awareness campaign which will include a video and posters.
- We explored concepts for video and posters. We decided that video should be no longer than three minutes and there should be four posters.
- Assessed needed resources such as make-up artist, wardrobe, photographer, and videographer
- Timeline was discussed. Need to recruit youths for project team, meet with project team, develop logo for project, and consider promotional items such as t-shirts and bracelets.



## **First Meeting with Selected Team**

The day after our first site meeting, I reached out to the leader of the youth group from Limón's Central Mayor's office Kristal Ward with whom I have coordinated and participated in workshops on HIV prevention for youth in Limón. I briefly told her about the project and asked if I could meet with the group to tell them about the project. She was able to schedule a meeting within two days.

Nine youths showed up for the meeting. Snacks were provided, and I started out by introducing myself and sharing my experiences with drug use. I felt that my personal story captivated them, and some expressed disbelief in my extensive history with drug addiction. They also expressed gratitude for me giving to Limón, because they stated that many people leave, do well, but don't return to give back. The following was discussed,

- Explanation of what the project was about and why I was interested in doing it in Puerto Limón and why I am addressing drug use among youths.
- Explained their role in implementing the project and all attendee agreed to be project member.
- Their main concern was what going to be different about this drug awareness? They felt that previous movements were not effective because all they said was "Say no to drugs." This needed further exploration and follow-up via email, whatsapp or phone call.
- Assessed to see if they were willing to be on posters. They all said yes.
- They recommended a local artist who could be consulted for creation of the logo.
- They expressed the importance of presenting this project to the Limón community once it's finished.
- They suggested locations for events and will inquire about obtaining a community theater which would be in-kind for such presentations.

- We started a conversation around positive resources for young people in this province.
- We discussed the need for a consent form that will need to be signed by any members who a part of the posters.
- Follow up after this meeting, explore logo, t-shirt for photo shoot, further explore concept for poster, conducting research on drug use specifically among youths in Limón, and explore workshops/events to bring youths together.

### **Creation of Logo**

- Before reaching out to the local artist, I researched spiritual meaning of different colors. I found out that green represents hope, and this is what this doctoral project wants to convey to the youths. Green is also the color associated with Puerto Limón. Lime is Limón in Spanish.
- I also explored the name for the project with would be catchy for the intended audience. I also wanted the name to be urban.
- I remembered many years ago some friends called me LCG (Lloyd Cole Goulbourne) and they said that should be my stage name if I started to do inspirational chats, so I decided to name the project LCG Project Hope/ Proyecto Esperanza. Wanted to include translation of project hope since majority of the youths identify more with the Spanish language.
- From New York I reached out to the local artist via telephone to inquire if he was able to assist us with creating a logo for the project. I explained the mission of the project and told him that this is a non-for profit project and I was seeking an artist who believed in the concept of the project and was willing to donate their time and talent, or provide their talent at a low scale fee. He stated that he would work on the logo and send me a sketch and then we can talk about cost.
- He turned out not to be a responsible person in terms of his time management. I had to call him a few time to ask about the sketch. He final sent it, but it was not in color as I suggested. He only did it with pencil. He also quoted me a price which I was not comfortable with, so I reached out to site team

members, and they said they fee was too high. He requested a down payment of \$75, and dropped the fee. He kept procrastinating and had many excuses as to why he was not able to finish the logo. I later realized that he was not a graphic artist. As a result, I began to inquire about an available graphic artist, and a friend referred me to one in the capital (San Jose).

- I reached out to her, and she believed in the project and charged a minimal fee.
- The hands that are holding hope for the youths in Puerto Limón and these hands will spring new beginnings.
- The hand is holding up the youths, the leaf presents new beginnings and color green, hope. Black is fashionable among the youths.
- Below is our official logo which was approved by site team and site members



### **Promotional Items**

- From previous and current experience as an administrator and founder of a ministry, I decided that we will need some items to promote the project, and as giveaways at our events. Youth love giveaways. Advertising is vital when presenting a new concept.

- T-shirts with the logo were ordered for the site team and selected team to wear for the photo shoot and also for publicity. T-shirts were done in green and white. The printing was done by printer in Limón who also believes in the project and charged a minimal fee.
- I also ordered bracelets with the name of the project imprinted on them. The first time I ordered about 300.
- I ordered women's bags with the logo and draw string bags for men. These were for give way to site team members at our second meeting.

### **Finances**

With God's blessings, I was able to cover all incurred expenses for this project. Due to frequent flyer miles, I was able to get two free airline tickets. Due to networking with local businesses, I was able to get needy materials for workshops, space for meetings and catering services.

### **Planning for Second Meeting with Site Team and Selected Team.**

- Coordinate travel dates with my job. Thank God that my employer supports my endeavors and allows me to take accumulated time when I need to travel. Also grateful for the staff that work with me who work every independently.
- Request space at the public library for site meeting
- Request space at Mayor's office for selected team meeting. It was a challenge to organize meeting with both group. Most of the selected team members work during the day and attend college at night. The site made most of the final decisions with input from the selected team.
- Had to set catering services.
- Review research that was done by IAFA on drug use among youths in Costa Rica. It was during this research that I found out that youths in Limón consume the least alcohol in Costa Rica, and they start using alcohol and other drugs at a later age than youths in other provinces.

- Once in Puerto Limón, I visited the central IAFA office there and met with director and other staff to speak about the project and their findings. During this meeting I also learned about additional resources for youths in Limón.

### **Second Site Team Meeting**

This meeting was held at the at the Limón public library. A site team member is the director of this library. Typical food was catered and gift bags where given out to each member. The ladies received a t-shirt, bracelet, bag with logo and hand lotion. The guys received a draw string bag with logo, t-shirt, bracelet and body wash. The following was discussed,

- Opened with prayer. This group always insists we open with a prayer.
- Recap of last meeting
- Proposed implementation and evaluation of project was discussed. The site team felt that this aspect will yield better results from the selected team members. They felt that some events might need to be changed. One being the elimination of surveys with youths. They feel that something like focus group would work better.
- We discussed IAFA findings and comments from selected team about being innovated with this project. Based on the above we came up with our final mission statement.
- We developed our final mission statement, “To empower youths in Puerto Limón to say “Yes to available resources for youths in Puerto Limón, and Say no to alcohol and other drugs.”
- We explored our objectives to empower the youths through this project
  - Creating Public Service Announcements (PSA)
  - Video/Posters
  - Conduct Workshops/pastoral counseling
  - Coordination of services(schools, churches, community based organizations, local government, sports teams)

- Youth Resource Guide/email address (long term goal)
- Palm Cards (long term goal)
- Conferences (long term goal)
- Facebook page
- Email address
- Exploration of concept for video
  - Three Minutes. We thought about youth's attention span.
  - Use positive encouragements
  - LCG tell story
  - Flashing of youth group, dance group, sports, spirituality, library, school(these are some of the positive resources which will be captured in the posters)
- Concept for posters explored. It should read as follow, "Youths of Puerto Limón, "Say yes to(a positive resource such as sport) .....and no to alcohol and other drugs."
- A site team member suggested that because Limón has the lowest number among youths who consume alcohol and other drugs, the poster should read "youths of Limón continue to say yes to....."
- We decided to highlight the positive resources first, followed by the slogan "Say no to alcohol and other drugs."
- Tentative resources that will be highlighted
  - Site Team
  - Sports
  - Youth group
  - Library
  - Education
  - Spirituality
- We plan to use a dance group from the Saint Marks church, youth group from Mayor's office, Site team members and sports figures from the community.
- Location for photo shoot, date for photo shoot and the need for a make-up artist was discussed.

1. Casa de La Cultura is a community center which is free of charge when conducting free events for the community. It's administered by the Mayor's office. This location is the team's first choice. Second choice is the Saint Marks church parish hall.
2. Proposed date for photo session is the end of May 2017 or beginning of June 2017.
3. Best day of the week would be a Saturday because youths who are going to participate are off from school and site team members don't work on weekends.
4. We decided that we should schedule timeframes for each group to show up for photo session. This would avoid long waiting time.
5. Make- up Artist. Candidate will reach out to Beauty Academy to inquire if students could do make-up as a school project.
6. Order t-shirt with logo. All participants will wear a t-shirt with project logo for photo.
7. Will reach out to the barber in the community to inquire if he could provide in-kind hair cut for the guys.
8. We will explore if lighting is needed?
9. Consent form giving the project permission to use participant's image in posters must be signed by each participant.

### **Second Meeting with Selected Team**

This meeting was held at one of the Mayor's satellite community offices. In attendance were ten members of the selected team and a site team member. Site members and selected team members are acquainted with each other. The site team suggested that we adopt ideas from selected team members, because they are younger and more in tune the urban culture in Puerto Limón and Costa Rica. We had pizza and natural drinks delivered. A site team member briefed the selected team on was discussed at the second site meeting two days prior to this meeting. Members agreed with ideas from site team

and stated that they will assist with securing Casa de la Cultura for photo session and presentation of the project to the community.

Study done by IAFA was shared with members, all but one member was aware that Limón had the lowest number among youths who consume alcohol and other drugs. As a result, they concurred that the highlight of the project should be bringing awareness to this information, and zooming in on positive resources which are available for youths. Results from research should be mentioned at every event we attend, and posters must focus on resources. Promotional items were distributed to members and feedback about items was positive. The following was also explored,

- Palm cards, team felt that it is needed, and they are willing to assist in gathering the emergency numbers. We decided that this is a project for the future. Members were not knowledgeable about palm cards.
- We also discussed creation of a directory with youth services that are available in Puerto Limón which will help with coordination of services. Members stated that currently there is no directory of youth services. This will also be a future project which will enrich the current project.
- It was suggested to reach out to several radio stations and request to be a guest to speak about the project, the research results, and existing resources. This will become another mode of providing public awareness.
- Candidate will reach out to Radio Casino which is the main radio station in Limón. Most resident are tuned into this station.
- We propose to do three radio shows. We will raffle tablets and expect that at least twenty radio listeners between the ages of 15-25 will call in to ask questions about the provided information and the project.
- I distributed copies of the proposed implementation and evaluation.



## **Proposed Plan of Implementation**

**Goal 1:** To increase awareness of causes and effects of drug use over the next eighteen months, by taking part in organized youth events, presentations at churches by and personal testimonies for the residents of Puerto Limón, Costa Rica.

**Revised Goal 1:** To increase awareness about studies done by IAFA and positive resources for youth in Puerto Limón, over the next twelve months,

**Strategy 1:** Organize and participate in 3-4 events for youths at church, community events, and sports club in Limón. These will be held between March and August 2017. Events will organize and sought out by site and team members.

**Strategy 2:** Students will take pre/posttest about substance abuse. Site team members will conduct the test.

**Revised Strategy 2:** By a show of hands, we will ask if attendees are aware of the fact that Limón has the lowest number among youths who consume alcohol and other drugs, and how many know of at least three positive resources for youths.

**Strategy 3:** DMIN student will share his experience, strength, and hope as it pertains to substance abuse at three youth events, one church, one community events and one high school February and August 2017.

**Strategy 4:** Workshop will be conducted at Puerto Limón Public Library for teachers, social workers, clergy and community workers. Purpose of the workshop is to bring awareness to resources that are available at the library on substance abuse. It will be done by August 2017 by Margaret Simson, librarian who is a site team member.

**Revised Strategy 4:** As a team we decided that this workshop will be time consuming in organizing, thus, is will tabled until 2018.

**Strategy 5:** Creation of five posters highlighting positive resources and encouraging youths to continue saying no to alcohol and other drugs. Campaign (posters) will be placed in 10 different locations in Limón (schools, community centers, hospitals and library).

**Strategy 6:** Creation of three minutes video with highlighting resources, information about IAFA research and brief testimony of candidate drug use. Five videos of awareness campaign will be distributed to high schools and libraries.

**Strategy 7 (new):** Be a guest least three times on radio shows to disseminate awareness and information about the project between June – September 2017.

**Strategy 8:** Present the project to the community by September 2017.

### **Evaluation:**

**Goal 1 Evaluation:** Will evaluate success of workshop by how many people from the community attend. Our goal is that at least fifty people will attend each workshop and 85% of attendees will score higher on posttest.

**Revised Goal 1 Evaluation:** Will evaluate success of events by how many youths attend. The goal is that at least thirty-five youths will attend each event, and 50% will have previous knowledge of IAFA research result and are aware of at least three positive resources for youths.

### **Outcome:**

Team organized three events and participated in a community organized and sport club meeting.

- **Pizza Party** (organized by team) - fifteen youths attended. Of the fifteen none of them knew Limón had the lowest numbers among youths who consumed alcohol and other drugs. Ten of the fifteen knew of at least two positive resources.
- **Youth Revival** (organized by team). This event was held at the Saint Mark's Episcopal. Invitations were sent out to several church youth groups and community based organizations. Candidate led worship and praise and gave a mini- sermon. Bracelet with logo was given to each attendee. A total of forty youths attended along with some parents. My testimony was included in the sermon. Each church group that attended received a gift bag with a tablet and other goodies. During fellowship time, we served food and gave out goodies

to everyone. We seized this time to address the IAFA research and available resources. To my surprise, again none of the attendees had heard about the result of the IAFA research, and some were college students. By a show of hands, fifteen knew about at least three positive resources and were of at one at some point.

- **Fidget Spinner Tournament** (organized by team). Team thought this was great tournament because spinners were the latest toy craze at the time and children's day was being celebrated. Youth from churches and the surrounding communities were invited to participate. We had first, second and third prizes. First place received a gold medal and an eight-inch tablet, second place received a silver medal and seven-inch tablet and third place a mini blue tube speaker. Equipment to play different sports was provided and we provided light refreshment. Thirty-five youths attended this event and out of the thirty-five ten had attended the youth revival, thus, they knew about the IAFA study and positive resources. The remaining twenty did not know. Even the Sunday school teachers did not know of studies, but knew about resources.
- **Celebration of youth day:** This event was organized by the mayor's office at the main park in Limón City. It featured a variety of games and the opportunity for youths to exchange ideas about improving social issues surrounding youths, such as drugs, crime, and early pregnancy. The selected team who works for the Mayor's office invited me to come out and share my findings about drug use among youths in Limón and to invite the public to the presentation of the project. During this event, site team members and I gave out bracelets and flyers. We also raffled off mini speakers, spinners, and tablets. There were over one hundred youths there and the environment was not conducive for a show of hands, so as we gave out the bracelets and flyer, we informed youths about the goal of the project and invited them to the presentation. I was given the opportunity to address the youths from a large stage.
- **Sport Club:** We were invited by a soccer coach who coaches young boys on Wednesdays at the main soccer stadium in Limón to give some words of

encouragement. This coach appears on one of the posters. The coach stated to us that he was not aware of the studies, but that his club for the young boys is one the positive resources that are available. I showed up with another site member and we encouraged the boys to stay in school and to continue to participate in sports. We congratulated them on doing positive things and encouraged them to stay away from alcohol and other drugs. There were fourteen young boys in this group. They did not know about IAFA.

**Goal 1 Evaluation:** Posters will be displayed at about five different locations by the end of 2017 in Limón (schools, community centers, hospitals, and library).

#### **Outcome**

- The Beauty Academy provide in-kind make-up artist for the photo session
- Photo session was successful. Was done by site member
- Five posters were created by site team member and taken to printing shop.
- Posters have been displayed at a presentation of the project to the community, at the public library, at Saint Marks Church, and the Mayor's Office. They will be displayed at the main hospital and two high schools in early 2018.
- We have been informed that the posters have started to generate conversations around the positive resources and the fact that the project is coming up with some solutions for coordination of services.

**Goal 1 Evaluation:** At least five copies of video will be distributed to high schools, churches, and libraries.

#### **Outcome**

- Video was done and edited by site team member. Video was presented to the community and got a good review. They were impressed with the transparency of the candidate story.
- Copies of the video will be produced and distributed early 2018.
- Facebook page was created to upload the video and other information about the project (LCG Project Hope).
- We also created an email address where questions can be sent.

**Goal 1 Evaluation:** at least thirty -five community residents will call into radio station with questions about project.

**Outcome**

- Between the months of June – September, I was a guest on Radio Casino five times.
- On two of the broadcasts, people from the community were able to call in. Approximately twenty residents called in to thank us for the information and stated the project is needed.
- Because of the radio shows, I was approached on the streets and in church about the information that was disseminated. A lot of gratitude was stated for me coming back and doing service.
- I saw people wearing the bracelet on the streets.

**Goal 1 Evaluation:** At least fifty residents will attend presentation.

**Outcome**

- Presentation was done at Casa de la Cultura.
- Fifty-five residents attended. We monitored attendance by the number of programs and bracelets that was given out.

**Goal 2:** Develop a team of at least six (6) to create a public awareness campaign to bring about change in public attitudes and behavior towards substance use in Limón.

**Revised Goal 2:** Develop a team of at least six members which will assist in creating a public awareness campaign which will educate youths about research findings from IAFA and available resources for youths in Puerto Limón

**Strategies 1:** Develop criteria for selection of team members. Criteria will be developed by site team and student by December 2016.

**Strategy 2:** Site team and student will research team building activities to be implemented by January 2017.

**Strategy 3:** Site team and student will develop mission statement for the demonstration project by December 2016.

**Evaluation of Goal 2:** This goal will be evaluated by meeting deadlines, recruitment of six team members according to developed criteria and are in accord with mission statement.

### **Outcome**

- Team members were identified by site team based past collaboration with youths from the Mayor's office
- Mission statement was developed, and banner was created with logo and mission statement.
- Our site team and team meetings were us as a team building activity.

**Goal 3:** The selected team along with students will develop the demonstration project.

**Strategy 1:** The team will explore different types of awareness campaigns and chose one that is determined suited for the targeted audience.

**Strategy 2:** The team will write a script for the campaign. April 2017.

**Strategy 3:** Photo shoot and video will be done by done by team members with skills set by July 2017.

**Strategy 4:** Video will be edited and view by all team members July 2017.

**Evaluation of Goal 3:** Completion of video and posters by July 2017.

## CHAPTER 7

### MINISTERIAL COMPETENCIES

#### **The Process**

As I stated in the previous chapter, my Site Team and team members live in Puerto Limón, Costa Rica. I have collaborated with them on several projects in Costa Rica and they were knowledgeable of the Doctoral Program before being asked to be a site team member.

On one of my trips to Costa Rica, they were briefed about the ministerial competencies. At the end, they identified a few competencies which I need to further develop. Throughout the implementation of the project these competencies were evaluated.

#### **Theologian**

It will be needed for my project and post-project. I will be sharing my life experiences through inspirational speaking. My speaking will include the sharing of scriptures to illustrate God's grace, mercy, and unconditional love for all human beings in spite of their narrative. I still need more training in biblical/scriptural studies, ability to effectively relate the word to my life experiences and my life to the word. During the time of the implementation of the project, I attended Bible classes in Costa Rica and New York. In addition, I reviewed my hermeneutic inventory which I did in my first year of seminary. I also reviewed the following books on exegetical study; *Old Testament Exegesis: A Handbook for Students and Pastors*, by Douglas K. Stuart, *Hermeneutics and*

*Processes of Biblical Interpretation*, by Henry A. Virkler and *Dictionary for Theological Interpretation of the Bible*, by Kevin Vanhoozer.

### **Preacher/Interpreter of Sacred Texts**

The team strongly agreed that this competency should continuously be upgraded. This will be beneficial toward making me a more effective speaker. It will also help me with voice projection and delivery. I have experience with this competency, but there is always room for improvement. This area was strengthened by doing workshops, mini-sermons and radio interviews during the implementation of the demonstration project.

### **Worship Leader.**

At first the site team and I decided that this competency was not needed for the project, because thought that we were only going to be doing workshops. As the project was being implemented, we integrated a youth revival service and I was assigned the role of the Worship Leader. According to The Worship, Arts and Media (WAM) network, one of the key roles of a worship leader is to lead people into God's presence. I chose songs which when sung, lead to the presence of God, and I incorporated songs which I had observed would lead the congregation into singing aloud and raising their hands; additionally, they would shed tears.

### **Prophetic Agent**

This skill was vital for the project. As part of the project I shared my experience, strength and hope with individuals, families, youth groups and congregations of all ages locally and internationally. My purpose is to inform them that living in the valley does not exclude them from God's unconditional love.



**Leader**

The leadership competency is vital not only for my project, but also for my ministry, my inspirational speaking and my administrative position at my current place of employment. I must be an effective leader as it relates to my site team and team members. I must be able to clarify expectations of site team and team members, motivate members, delegate assignments, hold each member accountable, and be willing to roll my sleeves up and get dirty if needed. As a leader, I have learned to be fair to the best of my ability and learn from my mistakes. The site team expressed to me that I grew a lot in this area. As leader for my project I utilized the leadership skills I have acquired over the past twenty years as a program director.

**Religious Educator**

According to the team, this is a vital responsibility for the doctoral project. We agreed that I need to apply some of personality theories I learned in social work and pastoral care and counseling. I was told by team that it's only through understanding and application my learning will benefit the youth of Puerto Limón and other places. With some resistance, I went back and briefly reviewed *Behavioral Theories* by B.F. Skinner and John B. Watson, *Psychodynamic Theory* by Sigmund Freud and *Humanist Theory* by Carl Rogers and Abraham Maslow. The need did not arise for application, but was a good refresher for me.

Hopefully my project will challenge people of all ages to examine or re-examine where they are in their faith and the support systems they have in place to assist them with their spiritual walk.

**Counselor**

By majority the team came to consensus that counseling is a needed competency for this project; however, I need to do more research about the Limón culture. I did so when I did research for the setting of the project. The plan is to integrate secular social work practices with pastoral care practices to assess the needs (financial, social, health, spiritual and housing) of individual/families that are broken. I will include motivational interviewing and stages of change theory. Systems theory will be useful to assess available resources. My social work experience has taught me the importance of follow-up and follow-through when providing counseling.

**Pastor**

Team does not see this competency as vital for this project. However, they expressed the fact that people in the community will see me as a pastor or call me Pastor Lloyd because of the Doctoral degree. I will explore this competency in the future.

**Spiritual Leader**

The team concurred that this competency is needed for my project, and suggested that I work on it on a daily basis. To grow in this vital area they proposed daily prayer, meditation, quiet time, reading scriptures, inspirational books, taking daily inventory of my actions and doing acts of kindness. My travels to do mission work and my inspirational speaking are additional aids for enhancing this competency. All the above are part of my daily spiritual practices.

My travels to do mission work and my inspirational speaking are additional aids for enhancing this competency. I need to develop a balance in this area, by this I mean taking time for myself and getting proper rest. My site members strongly agree with this being an area I work on so I can be an effective spiritual leader.

**Ecumenist**

Team expressed the fact that I have great command of this competency. This competency is imperative to my doctoral project as it will address HOPE to people regardless of age, race, sexual identity, creed, religion or lack of religion. My inspirational speaking is based on this competency.

**Witness or Evangelist**

I need more training to enhance this competency, but will seek training after the project is finished.

**Administrator**

Team members acknowledged my many years of experience in this area. It will be needed to oversee all activities of the doctoral project and delegate and hold site team accountable. I have over fifteen years of administrative experience.

**Professional**

The team assesses that I am good with time management which is of essence to complete assignments in a timely fashion. All ingredients of professionalism are needed for my doctoral project. Time management is one of my stronger skills. I was charged with researching key elements of professionalism. According to the July 22, 2013 *U.S News*, there are 10 key elements of professionalism that you should master early in your career:

1. Pay attention to the cultural norms in your organization, and follow them.
2. Be pleasant and polite to people, even if you don't like them
3. Take work seriously.
4. Speak up when work isn't getting done on time or when there are problems with a project.

5. Realize that getting feedback on your work – even critical feedback – is part of the job; it's not personal
6. You need to write clearly and professionally.
7. Be flexible
8. Show up reliably
9. Be helpful, and do more than solely what's in your job description
10. Don't treat your manager as your adversary.

### **Pastoral Skills**

The team mentioned that my pastoral skills will develop over a period of time; however, I have already acquired some of the skills from my leadership role, administrator role, social worker role and pastoral skills I obtained in the pastoral care program and from my Christian Pastoral Education internship. They stated that I am a visionary, team builder, self-motivated, passionate about what I do; open to changes; and a team player. I don't plan to oversee a church at this time.

### **Interpersonal Skills**

Team agreed that good interpersonal skills such as self-confidence, assertion, active listening, questioning, conflict resolution, among others is need to successfully complete this project. They assess that I have strong interpersonal skills, but must remain teachable and humble. These skills of will definitely allow me to establish meaningful relationships within the communities I will be working with.

### **Community Organizer**

The team felt the need to further develop this competency which is vital for completion of the project. The intent is to bring more awareness of drug addiction to a community in which this issues is still taboo. This was accomplished by me networking and partnering with churches, schools and community based organizations around Puerto

Limón, and organized events which brought residents of the community together for a common cause, and is able to effectively convey the benefits of bringing awareness to the positive resources for youths in Limón.

I received coaching from Marva Dixon who is familiar with the communities I am targeting and has years of experience as a community organizer.

I think the self-exploration this work has allowed me to do is vital for me providing pastoral care and for my demonstration project. It has allowed me to take a look at how my culture influenced and shaped my attitudes and behaviors. It has also allowed me to take a closer look at my skill set which is vital for professional life and the doctoral project. The work thus far has propelled me to take an inventory of my assets and liabilities. After the inventory, I realize that I need additional training for some of the competencies and that I need to select individuals with skills sets where I am not strong with for my site team.

## APPENDICES

Appendix A  
Demonstration Project Proposal

DON'T WRITE ME OFF:  
A STORY OF HOPE FOR THE YOUTH IN PUERTO LIMON, COSTA RICA

By  
LLOYD COLE GOULBOURNE

DEMONSTRATION PROJECT PROPOSAL

New York Theological Seminary

November 30, 2016

**Challenge Statement**

As President of Ruth's Mission and a native of Puerto Limon, Costa Rica, I am aware that historically alcohol and marijuana are culturally acceptable in Costa Rica. However, according to *La Nacion* a leading Costa Rican newspaper (May 20, 2016) there has been a 10% increase in the use of alcohol and marijuana among high school students over the past two years. If this issue is not addressed the potential for first time drug users will continue to increase and could lead to the use of other drugs such as cocaine and heroin. This demonstration project will create a public awareness campaign for the youth of Puerto Limon that will change their attitudes and behavior toward Substance abuse.



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## CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION TO THE SITE

I was born in Puerto Limon, Costa Rica. I grew up in the Episcopal Church, but now I worship at the Brooklyn Tabernacle church, which is a non-denominational Christian church. As a Social Worker/Administrator, I currently work for a non-profit<sup>1</sup> organization in the Brownsville section of Brooklyn, New York as a Program Director for a funded program which provides social services to individuals and families who are HIV positive.

In addition I am the president and founder of Ruth's Ministry which is a nonprofit organization based in Brooklyn, New York. The ministry's mission is to spread the gospel and provide goods and services to needy individuals and families, both locally and internationally. We have done mission work in Costa Rica, Panama, the Dominican Republic and the United States. The ministry has partnered with churches and community based organizations in these countries to carry out its mission. I am also an inspirational speaker who recently launched the "Don't Write Me Off" series. This series relates to life's trajectory and illustrates God's grace and mercy.

The site of this Doctor of Ministry demonstration project will not take place in my church/congregation, but will be conducted in different community settings in Puerto Limon, Costa Rica, which is also the site of my own spiritual formation before migration.

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<sup>1</sup> "A nonprofit is a tax-exempt organization that serves the public interest. In general, the purpose of this type of organization must be charitable, educational, scientific, religious or literary." Non-Profit & Fundraising Resources, "What is a Nonprofit Organization?" [http://www.nonprofit.pro/nonprofit\\_organization.htm](http://www.nonprofit.pro/nonprofit_organization.htm) (accessed November 15, 2016).

The project will be a combination of active research and inspirational speaking.<sup>2</sup> Ruth's Ministry and LCG Inspirational Speaking take place at the doctoral candidate's residence.

My demonstration project will be primarily done in Puerto Limón, Costa Rica. Puerto Limón is commonly known as Limón. It's the capital of Limón Province, as well as of the county of Limón in Costa Rica. Limon is the sixth-largest city in Costa Rica, with a population of over 55,000 (including surrounding towns), and is home to a multicultural community.<sup>3</sup> According to historians, part of the community traces its roots to Italian, Jamaican and Chinese laborers who worked on a late nineteenth-century railroad project that connected San José (the capital of Costa Rica) to Puerto Limón.<sup>4</sup> Not until after the revolution of 1948, did the Costa Rican government recognize Afro-Caribbean people as citizens<sup>5</sup> and remove the restriction on their movement outside Limón province.

The main site for the demonstration project will be the Saint Mark's Episcopal/Anglican church<sup>6</sup> in Puerto Limón which is also the site of my own spiritual

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<sup>2</sup> "An inspirational speaker is someone who delivers speeches with the intention of motivating or inspiring the people in the audience." Sokanu, "What is a Motivational Speaker?" <https://www.sokanu.com/careers/motivational-speaker> (accessed November 20, 2016).

<sup>3</sup> "Limon," <https://www.anywhere.com/costa-rica/destinations/limon> (accessed November 20, 2016).

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Nicola Foote, "Rethinking Race, Gender and Citizenship: Black West Indian Women in Costa Rica, c. 1920–1940," *Bulletin of Latin American Research* 23, no. 2 (2004): 200.

<sup>6</sup> "The Episcopal Church, established shortly after the American Revolution, has its roots in the Anglican Church. The Anglican Church, known as the Church of England, had a strong following in colonial America. But when the colonies won their independence, the majority of America's Anglican clergy refused to swear allegiance to the British monarch as was required. As a result, the Episcopal Church was formed," Episcopal Church, "History of the American Church," <http://www.episcopalchurch.org/page/history-american-church> (accessed November 20, 2016).

growth<sup>7</sup> before migration. The San Marcos Episcopal Church was established in 1896 as a small chapel to respond to a need felt by the islanders migrants and others (Jamaica, St. Lucia, Barbados and others) who came to Canton Central de Limón to build the railroad as well as other infrastructure (pipe, fills, drains lining the streets, etc.) to work in crop planting of cacao and banana plantations in the province. Other sites will include the Limón Public Library and a few cultural centers in the surrounding towns.

The church has a strong presence in the Limón community and provides needed service to the marginal individuals/families. The church has a feeding program which feeds the homeless and provides spiritual guidance twice a month. It also provides clothing, school supplies and workshops for the surrounding towns. Over the past years, Ruth's mission has partnered with the Saint Marks church in feeding the homeless. The services are provided in English and Spanish.

My site team members live in Costa Rica. We have worked together on several projects in Costa Rica and they are aware of my project for the Doctoral Program. On my trip to Costa Rica this past January, we briefly went over the competencies and identified a few which need development. Our official meeting to explore the DP will take in May 2016 in Puerto Limón, Costa Rica. Thus far my site team is made of Marva Dixon, a retired social worker and community organizer; Kendall Cayasso, a journalist; Herman Morales, a computer engineer; David Carnegie, a doctor in training; and Margaret Simpson, librarian. The site team will meet again in May 2017.

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<sup>7</sup> "Biblical spiritual formation is about actively engaging with God and following His commands. Paul told Timothy to train himself to be godly (1 Timothy 4:7). Biblical spiritual formation is a training program, an intentional effort to be godly, not in our own strength but through the power of Christ (John 15:5)." Compelling Truth, "What is Christian spiritual formation?" <https://compellingtruth.org/spiritual-formation.html> (accessed November 20, 2016).

## CHAPTER 2 PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS OF THE CHALLENGE

### Challenge Statement

As President of Ruth's Mission and a native of Puerto Limon, Costa Rica, I am aware that historically alcohol and marijuana are culturally acceptable in Costa Rica. However, according to *La Nacion* a leading Costa Rican newspaper (May 20, 2016) there has been a 10% increase in the use of alcohol and marijuana among high school students over the past two years. If this issue is not addressed the potential for first time drug users will continue to increase and could lead to the use of other drugs such as cocaine and heroin. This demonstration project will create a public awareness campaign for the youth of Puerto Limon that will change their attitudes and behavior toward Substance abuse.

During the last decades there has been an increase in social problems in the province of Limón, including drug trafficking, family disintegration or sexual abuse in young people. Recently, drug addiction and alcoholism have become increasingly prevalent. Due to the fact that alcohol and marijuana smoking is acceptable culturally in Puerto Limón, adequate attention has not been given to this social problem. There has been a 10% increase in the use of alcohol and marijuana among high school students over the past two years.<sup>8</sup>

I have had many conversations with community leaders, pastors, social workers and doctors during my mission trips to Limón, and they all stated that there is concern about the increase in alcohol and marijuana use among teenagers in Puerto Limón. They related that although there are some resources to address substance abuse throughout the

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<sup>8</sup> IAFA, "Alcohol es la droga más consumida entre los ticos," <http://www.iafa.go.cr/prevencion/novedades/280-alcohol-es-la-droga-mas-consumida-entre-los-ticos.html> (accessed November 20, 2016).

province, they are insufficient and not consistently available to the community. They all echoed the need for more workshops in schools, churches and community centers.

A study by the Adolescents' Clinic at the National Children Hospital in Costa Rica conducted among 3,373 school students in the metropolitan areas of Costa Rica indicates that the number of marijuana users increased from 1 percent in 1991 to 10 percent in 2006, and to 15 percent in 2014. According to the Costa Rican Social Security System, this data is consistent with studies released in 2014 by the Alcoholism and Drug Abuse Institute (IAFA). This study reported the use of marijuana by high school students at 14 percent.<sup>9</sup>

My demonstration project title will be “Don’t Write Me Off,” a message of hope for the youth of Puerto Limon (Project Hope/Proyecto Esperanza). The goal of this project is to increase awareness about drug use through workshops, presentation and sharing my experience with substance use. The end result will be a public awareness campaign which will include tools and practices that have worked for me and many others who have experienced brokenness with these issues; and most importantly, will hopefully lead to abstinence from drugs. Addressing the problem to youth is especially important as studies show that a young person who has managed to avoid drug use by age 15, is more likely to avoid it in later years.

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<sup>9</sup> L. Arias, *The Tico Times News*, July 10, 2014, <http://www.ticotimes.net/2014/07/10/health-officials-alarmed-by-increase-in-marijuana-use-among-young-ticos> (accessed November 25, 2016).

### CHAPTER 3 PLAN OF IMPLEMENTATION

**Goal 1:** To increase awareness of causes and effects of drug use among youths in Puerto Limon, Costa Rica.

- **Strategy 1:** Conduct workshops for high school students at three local high schools in Limón. Workshops will be conducted by Marva Dixon, a Site team member, and the candidate.
- **Strategy 2:** DMin candidate will share experiences, strength and hope as it pertains to substance abuse with two churches, two high schools and community centers in February and August 2017.
- **Strategy 3:** Workshop will be conducted at Puerto Limón Public Library for teachers, social workers, clergy and community workers. Purpose of the workshop is to bring awareness to resources that are available at the library on substance abuse. It will be done by August 2017 by the librarian, Margaret Simson, who is also a site team member.

**Evaluation of Goal 1:** Will evaluate success of workshop by percentage of attendees who take pre/post-tests. Our goal is that 85% of attendees will take pre/post-tests.

**Goal 2:** Will develop a team of at least six (6) to create a public awareness campaign to bring about change in public attitude and behavior towards substance use in Limon.

- **Strategies 1:** Develop criteria for selection of team members. Criteria will be developed with site team by December 2016.
- **Strategy 2:** Site team and candidate will research team building activities to be implemented by January 2017.
- **Strategy 3:** Site team and candidate will develop mission statement for the demonstration project by December 2016.

**Evaluation of Goal 2:** Four out of six team members will be recruited by January 2017.

**Goal 3:** The selected team along with candidate will develop the demonstration project.

- **Strategy 1:** The team will explore different types of awareness campaigns and choose one that is determined suited for the targeted audience.
- **Strategy 2:** The team will write script for campaign by April 2017.
- **Strategy 3:** Photo shoot and video will be done by done by team members with skills set by July 2017.
- **Strategy 4:** Video will be edited and view by all team members by July 2017.

**Evaluation of Goal 3:** 75% of project will be completed by July 2017.



## CHAPTER 4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

My research questions were guided by reading chapter seven of *Research Design* by John W. Creswell, which is a text that has been used for the research class. Creswell focuses on how to formulate research questions for qualitative and quantitative research. The Doctor of Ministry research project requires qualitative research in order to “explore the complex set of factors surrounding the central phenomenon and present the varied perspectives or meaning that participants hold.”<sup>10</sup> My qualitative research will be a dual reflective and reflexive memoir. I will look back at my life and reflect on my twenty years of powerlessness over alcohol and cocaine. I will then share my spiritual journey to sanity and self-awareness. I will then take a look at the theological, psychological and social/cultures perspective of addiction through the following research questions:

### **Biblical**

*What lesson about hope can be taken away from the story of Noah getting drunk which is found Genesis 9:20-25.*

- I will examine how weakness and grace are presented in the Bible.
- I will exegete Genesis 9:20-25 to show the power of grace over the drunkenness of even the perfect Noah, a “proof of human weakness and imperfection” that depends upon Divine grace.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> John W. Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*, 3rd ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, 2009), 129.

<sup>11</sup> Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry Commentary*, <http://biblehub.com/commentaries/mhc/genesis/9.htm> (accessed November 23, 2016).

## **Theological**

*What are some historical theological perspectives of drunkenness?*

- I will use the Bible and other sacred documents as my primary sources.
- Being a student of the Pastoral Care cohort, a theological perspective of addiction/drunkenness is vital to enhance my pastoral counseling skills.

Theological questions are essential in this discipline.

## **Psychological Perspective**

*What are some psychological perspectives of drug addiction?*

- For this perspective I look at different personality theories, such as Bowen.
- As a Pastoral Care counselor, it's vital that I be able to see actions and relations outside of the theological framework. This will help me take a look at behaviors outside of the church structure. It will help combine the theological perspective to provide a more holistic understanding of individuals.

## **Historical/Social and Cultural Analysis**

*How do cultural/social conditions contribute to drug addiction?*

- For this question I will take a look at the interaction between biology and society in terms of human formation.
- This will help me better understand cultures and differences in each culture which might lead to addiction.

## CHAPTER 5 MINISTERIAL COMPETENCIES

### **The Process**

As I stated at the Site Team orientation, members of my site team live in Puerto Limón, Costa Rica. We have worked together on several projects in Costa Rica and they are aware of my project for the Doctoral Program. The site team met on June 30, 2016 to process the ministerial competencies.

Thus far my site team is made up of Marva Dixon, a retired social worker and community organizer; Kendall Cayasso, a journalist; Herman Morales, a computer engineer; David Carnegie, a doctor in training; and Margaret Simpson, a librarian.

A summary of the Site Team's and my assessments of ministerial competencies are as follow.

### **Theologian**

Candidate needs this competency for this project as he will be sharing his life experiences via Inspirational Speaking. He has a good understanding of the scriptures, but needs to apply them to life situations.

### **Preacher/Interpreter of Sacred Texts**

Candidate will benefit from this, in order to make his inspirational speaking more effective. It will also help him with his voice projection and delivery

**Prophetic Agent**

Candidate has proven to site team via his inspirational speaking that he knows his audience and has a voice tone which captures the audience from beginning to end of his sharing words of hope.

**Leader**

Candidate possesses strong leadership skills. He comes with an extensive leadership background. He is aware that this competency is vital not only for this project, but also for his ministry and secular job.

**Religious Educator**

Candidate comes from a Social Work and Pastoral care counseling background. The team has had the opportunity to observe him in action providing both services. His excellent interpersonal skills are an asset for this project.

**Counselor**

Candidate is strong in this area. He has the skills and ability to integrate Social Work practices with Pastoral Care practices to assess the needs (financial, social, health, spiritual and housing) of individual/families that are broken.

**Spiritual Leader**

Candidate works on his spirituality daily through prayer, meditation, quiet time, reading scriptures, inspirational books, taking daily inventory of his actions and doing acts of kindness. He does well at guiding individuals spiritually due to his security in his higher power and transparency with his life's journey

**Ecumenist**

Candidate has an embracing personality which allows him to reach out to people in spite of their race, sex, age, sexual identity, creed, religion or lack of religion.

**Witness or Evangelist**

Candidate witnesses by doing his inspirational speaking.

**Administrator**

The candidate has many years of experience in this area. He has the needed skills to oversee all activities of the DP and delegate and hold the site team accountable.

**Professional:**

Team is confident that candidate possesses good time management skills, which are essential to complete assignments in a timely fashion. Candidate presents himself well when conducting meetings.

**Interpersonal Skills**

Candidate possesses strong interpersonal skills which allow him to establish meaningful relationships within the community.

**Faith-Rooted Community Organizer**

Candidate is a great organizer and has the skills to bridge divides.

**Competencies Chosen by Site Team for Development**

**1. Theologian:** candidate will need more training in biblical/scriptural studies, in order to effectively relate the scriptures to his life experiences and his life to the Word.

**Strategies**

- Will review *Biblical Exegesis: A Beginner's Handbook* by John H. Hayes
- Will attend Bible study classes at his own church
- Will research and register for additional training in biblical exegesis

**Evaluation**

- Will conduct mini presentation for site members and get their critique

- Will have a pre-launch for his Motivational Speaking in New York and Costa Rica and get feedback from the audience.

**2. Community Organizer:** Will need to work on coordination skills in bringing residents of the Limon community together for a common cause, and be able to effectively convey the benefits of bringing this awareness to their community. This will mean partnering with different organizations in the community, which will include churches.

### **Strategies**

- Attend communities' meeting
- Organize events (food, clothing and school supplies) in the communities I am trying to capture via my ministry.
- Receive coaching from Marva Dixon who is familiar with the communities being targeted and has years of experience as a community organizer.
- Attend trainings sessions.
- Meet with community and church leaders.

### **Evaluation**

- Assess number of residents who attend community meetings
- Do community assessment survey
- Get verbal feedback from residents and community leaders.

**3. Spiritual Leader:** Candidate needs to continue to work on spiritual leadership on a daily basis to remain consistent with his spiritual journey

### **Strategies**

- Develop timetable for trips/events with team members
- Practice self-care (eating, exercise and quiet time)

- Space out events.
- Take class on self-care
- Take daily inventory of self

**Evaluation**

- Daily assessment to see if feeling HUNGRY, ANGRY or LONELY.

## CHAPTER 6 EVALUATION

### **Method of Evaluation 1**

- Each workshop will yield approximately 20 students for a total of 60 students by July 2017.
- 85% of students will take pre and post-test by July 2017.
- Workshop at library will be attended by approximately 10 providers (June 2017)

### **Method of Evaluation 2**

- Awareness Campaign posters will be placed in 10 different locations in Limón (schools, community centers, hospitals and library). Five videos of awareness campaign will be distributed to high schools and libraries.



## APPENDICES

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## Appendix A: Timeline

<b>Date</b>	<b>Task/Activity</b>	<b>Tools needed</b>	<b>Person Responsible</b>
6/2016	Submit draft of proposal	Submit copy in drop box on Moodle.	Me
8/2016	Meet with Site Team	Site Team member's house in Limon, Costa Rica	Me/Site Team
10/2016	Attend one week seminar	NYTS	Me
11/2016	Submit final draft of proposal	Submit two copies	Me
10/2016	Submission of competencies needed to work on	Email copy to Director of the Doctorate Program	Site Team
12/2016	Phone Conference with Site Team	Make phone call	Me
2/2017	Workshop at High school and presentation at church in Limón	Hand-outs, projector, screen, microphone, goodies for attendees	Me/Site Team
2/2017	Meet with Site Team to select team to work on DP.	Criteria for selection and mission statement. Meeting will take place at site team member home in Limón	Me/Site Team
2/2017	Meet with selected members of team that will help work on DP	Mission Statement Will meet at Café in Puerto Limón	Me/ Site Team/Team Members
April/2017	Phone conference with site Team and Team members	Make conference call	Me
June/2017	Workshop at High School and presentation at church and library	Hand-outs, projector, screen, microphone, goodies for attendees	Me/Site Team
June/2017	Preparation for photo shoot and video	Scripts for video, video camera	Me/ Site Team/Make-Up artist/ videographer
July 2017	Photo Shoot, Video making	Location (TBA)	Me/ Site Team/Make-Up artist/ videographer
July 2017	Editing		videographer
July 2017 – January 2018	Start writing dissertation		Me
February 2018	Submission of project and	Dr. Lundy	Me
April 2018	Oral Presentation	Power Point	Me

## Appendix B: Budget

<b>Date</b>	<b>Task/Activity</b>	<b>Tools needed</b>	<b>Person Responsible</b>	<b>Budgetary consideration cost</b>	<b>Source of Funding</b>
8/2016	Meeting with Site Team in Costa Rica	Airline Fare/ Food for meeting	Me	\$1000	Me
1/2017	Goal 1 Strategy 1,2,3 Workshops and presentation	Airline fare/ snacks/pamphlets Projector/ microphone/ transportation/video camera	Me, church, schools, Site Team	\$3500	Me, in-kind by school, church and videographer
1/2017	Meeting with Site Team	Food	Me	\$200	Me
1/2017	Goal 2 Meeting with Site Team and selected team to assist with DP	Projector/copies/ food	Me/Site Team	\$350	Me/ copies will be in-kind by site team member
5/2017	Goal Strategy 1,2,3 Workshops and presentation	Airline fare/snacks/ pamphlets Projector/ microphone/ transportation/video camera	Me, church, schools , Site Team	\$4000	Me, in-kind by school, church and videographer
5/2017	Meeting to prepare for photo shoot and video	Transportation/food	Me/Site team	\$400	Me
5/2017	Photo shoot video making	Videographer, make-up artist, transportation, food	Me, site team, videographer, make-up artist, driver	\$4500	Donations from friends and me
8/2017	Video Editing	Videographer/Me	Videographer/me	\$2000	THA
8/2017	Printing of posters and production of video	Videographer/printing shop	Videographer/ Site team	\$5000	THA

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Appendix B  
Project Hope Album

Do We Write Off? A story of hope for the youth in Puerto Limon, Costa Rica



Official Logo: Created by local artist and approved by site team and youth group from Limon's Mayor Office.



Site Location: Puerto Limon, Costa Rica.



Site Team Members: Marva Dixon, Margaret Simpson, Dave Carnegie, Hernán Gray, Michael Lopez, Kendall Cayasso



First Site Team Meeting



Second Site Team Meeting





Selected Team: Youth Group from Limon's Central Mayor Office



First Meeting Selected Team



Second Meeting Selected Team





## Organized Events

### Workshops



## Pizza Party



## Photo Session





## Spiritual Meeting for Young People



Participation in Youth Day Event



Children's Day Celebration







## Presentation of the Project to the Community





## Project Promotional Items



## Radio Shows



## Invitations



## Awareness Posters











Encouraging Words at Juan Coban Stadium







Appendix C  
Carta para Marcos



LCG Proyecto Esperanza/Project Hope

Lloyd Cole Goulbourne  
1350 Bedford Ave, Brooklyn New York 11216 (917) 346-4061  
Correo electrónico: [lcg25@verizon.net](mailto:lcg25@verizon.net)

Limón, 2 de Mayo de 2017

Marcos Levy  
Academia de Belleza y Moda Marcos Levy.

Presente

Un cordial saludo para usted, el personal y los estudiantes de la academia que dignamente representan a la población limonense en especial.

Mi nombre es Lloyd Cole Goulbourne un Limonense radicado en los Estados Unidos en el estado de Nueva York.

Estoy trabajando en mi tesis para optar por el doctorado en ciencias teológicas en la universidad de: New York Theological Seminary, 475 Riverside Drive Suite 500 New York, NY 10115, phone 212-870-1211 página web [www.nyts.edu](http://www.nyts.edu).

Para la cual estoy realizando el proyecto final en mi pueblo natal Limón. El proyecto se llama LCG Proyecto Esperanza/Project Hope que consiste en fortalecer y rescatar a los jóvenes limonenses del alcohol y otras drogas y concientizar a la juventud que en Limón hay otras alternativas para el desarrollo de una vida saludable.

Tengo la complacencia de dirigirme a usted y de su destacada academia con el maquillaje de los participantes, para la realización de las sesiones fotográficas para los posters o carteles del proyecto el sábado 27 de mayo del 2017 de 8:00am a 2:00pm, en el salón de la escuela San Marcos, es por ello que recurrimos a ustedes como gestores de la formación integral de la juventud solicitando el apoyo en este proceso que estamos desarrollando.

El proyecto es sin fines de lucro para los que participamos en ella, pretendemos unirnos al esfuerzo que desarrolla el Señor Alcalde Néstor Mattis en cambiar la imagen de “Como nos ven y el Cómo queremos que nos vean”.

La academia será mencionada como una de los colaboradores y ayudarlos de esa manera con la publicidad y promoviéndolos en el pueblo Limonense como unos de los motores de un nuevo Limón.

Adjunto se le hace entrega de un resumen del proyecto.

Agradeciendo de antemano su apoyo y colaboración en el desarrollo de este esfuerzo en beneficio de las personas, la familia y el pueblo limonense en general, quedando a su disposición para mayores detalles puedes contactar a Hernán Gray tel: 84648614, Marva Dixon tel: 27951676.

Atentamente,

*Lloyd Cole Goulbourne*

Lloyd Cole Goulbourne, MSW, MAPPC, Doctorate of Ministry Candidate

Founder & President of RUTH'S Mission.

Appendix D Carta de Agradecimiento



**LCG Project Hope/Proyecto Esperanza**

Lloyd Cole Goulbourne

| 1350 Bedford Ave | Brooklyn | New York 11216 |

| Teléfono: (917) 346-4061 | Correo electrónico: [lcg25@verizon.net](mailto:lcg25@verizon.net) |

Limón, 8 de Junio de 2017

Marcos Levy

Director de la Academia de Belleza y Moda Marcos Levy

Presente

Departamento de LCG Project Hope/Proyecto Esperanza, quiero extender un cordial saludo a la vez expresar nuestro sincero agradecimiento por la colaboración de la Academia de Belleza y Moda Marcos Levy en la sesión fotográfica del proyecto el día Sábado 27 de Mayo del presente año.

Con su apoyo nos acercamos cada vez más al objetivo del proyecto que es “empoderar a los jóvenes Limonenses a seguir diciendo sí a los recursos positivos, y no al alcohol y otras drogas” e incentivarlos al desarrollo integral, y al cambio de imagen de cómo nos ven y como queremos que nos vean.

Gracias de nuevo por el apoyo y colaboración.

Atentamente,

*Lloyd Cole Goulbourne*

Lloyd Cole Goulbourne, MSW, MAPPC, Doctorate of Ministry Candidate

Appendix E  
Casa Oficial Casa de Cultura



LCG Proyecto Esperanza/Project Hope

Lloyd Goulbourne  
**1350 Bedford Ave, Brooklyn New York 11216**  
**(917) 346-4061**

**Correo electrónico: lcole25@verizon.net**

21 de febrero de 2017

Sr. Jorge Calvo Arce  
Administrador Casa de la Cultura.

Presente

Un cordial saludo para ti y el personal que dignamente desarrollan programas para la población limonense en especial dirigida a la niñez y adolescencia.

Mi nombre es Lloyd Cole Goulbourne un Limonense radicado en los estados unidos en el estado de Nueva York.

Estoy trabajando en mi tesis para optar por el doctorado en ciencias teológicas en la universidad de: New York Theological Seminary, 475 Riverside Drive Suite 500 New York, NY 10115, phone 212-870-1211 página web [www.nyts.edu](http://www.nyts.edu).

Paro lo cual estoy realizando el proyecto final en mi pueblo natal Limón. El proyecto se llama LCG Proyecto Esperanza/Project Hope que consiste en fortalecer y rescatar a los jóvenes limonenses del alcohol y otras drogas y concientizar a la juventud que en Limón hay otras alternativas para el desarrollo de una vida saludable.

Tengo la complacencia de dirigirme a usted, con el fin de solicitar la Casa de la Cultura para la realización de las sesiones fotográficas para los posters o carteles del proyecto el sábado 27 de mayo del 2017 de 7:00am a 5:00pm, posteriormente para la presentación del proyecto al pueblo limonense los días 7 y 8 de setiembre del 2017, es por ello que recurrimos a usted como gestor de la formación integral de la juventud solicitando su apoyo en este proceso que estamos desarrollando.

El proyecto es sin fines de lucro para los que participamos en ella, pretendemos unirnos al esfuerzo que desarrolla el Señor Alcalde Néstor Mattis en cambiar la imagen de “Como nos ven y el Cómo queremos que nos vean”.

Este esfuerzo se está desarrollando con un grupo de jóvenes voluntarios dispuestos a participar activamente en el nuevo Limón.

Adjunto se le hace entrega de un resumen del proyecto.

Agradeciendo de antemano su apoyo y colaboración en el desarrollo de este esfuerzo en beneficio de las personas, la familia y el pueblo limonense en general, quedando a su disposición para mayores detalles puedes contactar a Hernán Gray tel: 84648614.

Atentamente,

*Lloyd Cole Goulbourne*

Lloyd Cole Goulbourne, MSW, MAPPC, Doctorate of Ministry Candidate

Founder & President of RUTH'S Mission.

Appendix F  
Consent Form



**LCG Project Hope/Proyecto Esperanza**

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